



Office of the State Long-Term Care
Ombudsman
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Barbara J. Hickert, State Ombudsman

Laura Kelly, Governor

Date: January 28, 2021
To: Rep. Susan Concanon, Chair
House Children and Seniors Committee
From: Barbara Hickert, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
Re: Neutral testimony for House Bill 2114

Chairperson Concannon and Members of the Children and Seniors Committee,

My name is Barbara Hickert, and I am the State Long-term Care Ombudsman. Thank you for the opportunity to offer neutral testimony on HB 2114 establishing a Senior Services Task Force. Our agency advocates for the right of individuals in adult care homes throughout Kansas. This includes nursing facilities, as well as assisted living facilities, residential health care facilities, home plus facilities, and boarding care facilities.

Our agency supports creating a task force to review areas of concern to older adults and provide direction for senior services. It should be clear from the impact of Covid-19 on seniors and especially those residing in long-term care that this is needed and long over-due. There are serious issues that affect the hundreds of thousands of older Kansans who need or will soon need long-term services and support.

We appreciated the addition in this bill of the representative of AARP. But, we there is still a need for more of a voice from the consumer. Consumers are the only ones who can truly speak on the needs they have, what is currently working, and the problems they face. Our program would be able to help identify and support adult care home residents and family members willing to bring their voices to this process. We would also recommend representation from the Alzheimer's Association, the Silver Haired Legislature, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).