

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO **SENATE, No. 3357**

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 13, 2023

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 3357.

As amended by the committee, this bill requires the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman to include memory care training in the ombudsman's annual long-term care training program. The ombudsman is responsible for securing, preserving, and promoting the health, safety, and welfare of New Jersey's long-term care residents, through investigations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation; legislative and regulatory advocacy; policy work; and education and outreach.

Under current law, the ombudsman is required to establish, in consultation with the Department of Health, an annual long-term care training program which, at a minimum, is to address the following subjects: the rights of residents of long-term care facilities; fostering choice and independence among residents of long-term care facilities; identifying and reporting abuse, neglect, or exploitation of residents of long-term care facilities; long-term care facility ownership; updates on State and federal guidelines, laws, and regulations that pertain to long-term care facilities; and issues, trends, and policies that impact the rights of long-term care residents. This bill, as amended, expands the required list of subjects to include the needs and rights of long-term care residents who have Alzheimer's disease and related disorders, and methods to deal with the specific problems encountered by such residents.

This annual training program is required to be completed by the ombudsman's investigative and advocacy staff, the ombudsman's volunteer advocates, and Department of Health long-term care facility surveyors, inspectors, and complaint investigators. Subject to the availability of staff and funding, the training program is offered to residents of long-term care facilities, those residents' family members, advocacy organizations, government agencies, and long-term care facility employees.

As amended by the committee, the bill provides that, if the annual long-term care training program does not include memory care

training within one year after the effective date of the bill, the ombudsman may be required to appear before one or more legislative standing reference committees to explain why the bill has not been implemented as enacted and the steps the ombudsman is taking to implement the bill. This provision will remain in effect until the training program includes the memory care component, at which time the provision will expire.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments revise the scope of the memory care training to provide that it include training in the needs and rights of long-term care residents who have Alzheimer's Disease and related disorders and the specific problems encountered by such residents. As introduced, the bill required training on the causes and progression of Alzheimer's Disease and related disorders and methods to deal with the specific problems encountered in the care of residents with Alzheimer's Disease and related disorders

The committee amendments provide that, if the annual long-term care training program does not include the memory care training outlined in the bill within one year after the effective date of the bill, the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman may be required to appear before various legislative standing reference committees until such time as the training program includes the memory care component.