

ASSEMBLY AGING AND SENIOR SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4484

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 8, 2020

The Assembly Aging and Senior Services Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4484.

As amended by the committee, this bill requires the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (ombudsman) to establish a long-term care advocacy and educational training program.

Under the amended bill, the ombudsman would be required to establish, in consultation with the Department of Health, an annual long-term care training program. At a minimum, the program 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. The annual training program is 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 to be offered to residents of long-term care facilities, those residents' family members, advocacy organizations, government agencies, and long-term care facility employees. To develop and implement the training program, the ombudsman may contract or consult with a non-profit organization that possesses expertise on the rights of residents in long-term care settings.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to alter the applicable requirements associated with the ombudsman's establishment of a long-term care training program. Specifically, the amendments would require that the program be provided annually, and they would require the training program to include content informing participants about any updates to State and federal guidelines, laws, and regulations that pertain to long-term care facilities; and about any issues, trends, and policies that impact the rights of long-term care residents. These subjects would be

in addition to the other subject matters that were already required to be addressed by the training program under the bill, as introduced. The amendments also require the annual training program 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. The amendments further provide that, subject to the availability of staff and funding, the training program is to be offered to residents of long-term care facilities, those residents' family members, advocacy organizations, government agencies, and long-term care facility employees. Finally, the amendments provide that, in order to develop and implement the training program, the ombudsman may contract or consult with a non-profit organization that possesses expertise on the rights of residents in long-term care settings (not one that possesses expertise on the federal laws and regulations pertaining to long-term care facilities, as was provided in the introduced bill).