

February 29, 2024

The Honorable Evan Shanley
Chair, House Committee on State Government and Elections
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for H 7565 – 2024

Dear Chairman Shanley,

My name is Heidi, I am writing to you as a community member, social work advocate and someone who has attended the LTCCC meetings religiously since Fall 2019 and writing in support of House Bill 7565. This bill, if passed, would significantly improve the Council's ability to develop and coordinate state policy concerning all forms of long-term health care for seniors and adults with chronic conditions.

The Long Term Care Coordinating Council is a public body tasked with providing state policymakers, including the House of Representatives, with information and recommendations on how our state can best serve our constituents who require significant care for chronic conditions. Statutorily, members are not able to participate remotely. This requirement makes it difficult for members to participate, especially those who are unable to travel to a meeting due to long term care issues of their own. By passing this bill, we can lift that requirement and ensure that representatives of the people the Council is meant to serve are able to fully participate in the meeting.

As structured, the Council requires an in-person meeting of 33 stakeholders from across the state, of which 17 members are needed to form a quorum. Because this is a meeting of a wide variety of stakeholders, including state officials, nonprofit leaders, working healthcare professionals, and consumers of the health services the council oversees, scheduling meetings around a quorum is a challenge. In turn, the progress of the Council is sometimes hampered when we are unable to approve minutes or take votes. This bill would bring the quorum requirement of the Council in line with other policy councils managed by the Lieutenant Governor, such the Emergency Management Advisory Council, and allow us to work more effectively.

The small changes proposed in this bill would, if enacted, have a large impact in our state's ability to develop and implement policies that would serve Rhode Island's long term care community.

It is the smallest of improvements that can make some of the biggest improvements, including this bill! We need more voices for those who often fall between the cracks. Please pass H 7565.

Gratefully,

Heidi K. Ross, BSW, MSW
Community member and Social Work Advocate

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections
The Honorable Mary Duffy Messier, Deborah Fellela, Barbara Ann Fenton-Fung, Katherine Kazarian,
and Julie Casimiro
Nicole McCarty, Esq.