



March 20, 2025

Chair Klevorn and members of the State Government Finance & Policy Committee,

I am writing to you in support of HF 1837, a bill that allows OOLTC staff to drive unmarked fleet vehicles.

OOLTC advocates for people receiving long-term services and supports in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, private residences, and other settings. We meet with residents in-person throughout the state. For many Regional Ombudsmen, this means driving long distances between facilities. There are currently 7 Regional Ombudsmen who drive fleet vehicles as this is more cost effective than mileage reimbursement.

An essential aspect of our service is the resident's right to meet with a Regional Ombudsman privately, without the knowledge of the facility. We can only share our involvement with a resident once they have provided us with consent to advocate with and for them. This requirement in the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program's federal statute is to mitigate the risk of retaliation for the resident.

When Regional Ombudsmen arrive at a facility in a vehicle marked with the state insignia, facility staff are alerted to our presence, often announcing that the "state" is in the building. This makes maintaining the resident's privacy more difficult. Adding OOLTC to the list of offices and agencies that may drive unmarked fleet vehicles supports resident privacy and helps mitigate the risk of retaliation.

Thank you for considering HF 1837. This small change can have a significant impact for residents.

Sincerely,



Parichay Rudina
Legislative Specialist
Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care