



STATE COUNCIL MEETING
 Thursday, January 22, 2026
 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST

OPEN SESSION MINUTES

| STATE COUNCIL MEMBERS | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Alanna Lavelle, Northwest (1) | Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Wanda Harrison, South Central (17) | Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Marshall Kapp, Panhandle (2) | Present <input type="checkbox"/> | Jane Horowitz, Pinellas (6) | Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Vacant, North Central (3) | Present <input type="checkbox"/> | Patrick Cannan, Palm Beach (11) | Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Vacant, Withlacoochee (4) | Present <input type="checkbox"/> | Sandra Rae, Treasure Coast (16) | Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Terry Lonczak, North Central (7) | Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Rita Duncan, Southwest (10) | Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Vacant, Brevard (18) | Present <input type="checkbox"/> | Paul Wilson, Broward | Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Michael Swain, First Coast South (15) | Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Clive Pearce, North Dade | Present <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vacant, First Coast (5) | Present <input type="checkbox"/> | Charles Garavaglia, South Dade (14) | Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Vacant, East Central (9) | Present <input type="checkbox"/> | Mary Darling, At-Large Member | Present <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Brooke Becker, West Central (8) | Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |

| OTHER OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM REPRESENTATIVES | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Terri Cantrell | State Ombudsman |
| JoAnn Quiles | Deputy State Ombudsman |
| Erica Hill | Legal Advocate |
| Angela Andrews | Legal Assistant |
| Diandra Taylor | Training and Development Manager |
| Tracie Rayfield | Transfer and Discharge Manager |
| Stephan Adelson | Special Projects Manager |
| Tracy Schooley | Volunteer Coordinator |
| Gloria Freyre | East Regional Manager |
| Diana Medina | West Regional Manager |
| Lisa Dale | North Regional Manager |
| Deborah Franklin | Withlacoochee Council |
| Vivian Simo Lopez | North Dade Council |
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| GUESTS: | |
| Trey Fenske, DOEA Chief of Staff | |
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1. Call to Order / Quorum (10:00 a.m)

- Quorum confirmed.

- October 2025 minutes approved.
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2. Membership Updates

- Marshall concluded his term; replacement expected by next meeting.
 - Welcomed new members:
 - Sandra Rae – Treasure Coast
 - Clive Pearce – North Dade
 - Several State Council vacancies remain.
 - A short-term **Membership Workgroup** (through April) will be formed to:
 - Review recruitment and retention of council members.
 - Address turnover and onboarding concerns.
 - Members interested in serving are to contact the Chair or Vice Chair.
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3. State Ombudsman Report (Terri Cantrell)

Program Focus for 2026

- Primary focus: **Legislative Advocacy**
- Increased off-season meetings with legislators.
- “Day on the Hill” planned.
- No separate work groups; council will operate as one unified legislative advocacy body.

Staffing

- 32 full-time staff statewide (compared to significantly higher staffing in similar states).
- Florida ratio: approximately 1 ombudsman per 6,500 beds (national best case: 1 per 2,000 beds).
- Continued use of OPS (Other Personnel Services) staff to fill gaps.
- Emphasis on prioritizing facilities most in need due to limited resources.
- Efforts underway to strengthen collaboration with APS.
- First Coast District Manager hired; Panhandle DM position open.

Volunteer Recruitment & Retention

- Recruitment campaign launching January 2026 (targeted outreach via NPR, social media).
- New Volunteer Coordinator (Tracy Schooley) hired.
- Council emphasized:
 - Retention is as important as recruitment.
 - Need for greater transparency about program demands.
 - Consider revising recruitment video to reflect complexity of cases.

- Volunteers should be matched to strengths (facility visits, office support, advocacy).
- Concern about volunteers dropping out during or shortly after training.

Training & Conference

- State conference planning underway (possible locations: St. Augustine, Daytona, Lakeland).
 - Tentative timeframe: last two weeks of April.
 - Training survey to be distributed.
 - Plans for interactive training (role play, regional breakout sessions).
 - Statewide council trainings planned.
 - Monthly newsletter continues; success stories requested.
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4. Legislative Update – Trey Fenske (Chief of Staff)

- LTCOP secured second-level Capitol space for Hill Day.
 - Key committees:
 - Senate: Health Policy; Children & Families.
 - House: Multiple healthcare-related committees.
 - Encouraged direct engagement with legislators.
 - Offered assistance to help scheduling meetings.
 - Discussed updated MOU with DCF clarifying ombudsmen are not mandatory reporters.
 - Corporate ownership and non-local management of facilities identified as increasing advocacy challenges.
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5. District Reports / Trends

Common Statewide Issues

- Volunteer shortages and training drop-off.
- Increased memory care complexity.
- Higher resident acuity and fall risk.
- Staffing shortages in ALFs and nursing homes.
- Facilities admitting residents despite inadequate staffing.
- ALFs require families to hire private sitters (approx. \$8,000/month additional).
- Additional fees imposed on residents are beyond base cost (activities, assistance, mobility).
- Increased reports of:
 - Financial exploitation by family members.
 - Theft within facilities.
 - Executive leadership misconduct.
- Transfer/Discharge cases increasing.

- Blurring lines between ALF and memory care levels of service.
- Corporate/non-local ownership impacting accountability.

District-Specific Highlights

- **Northwest**
 - High volunteer attrition before fingerprinting.
 - ALFs are understaffed (e.g., 1 staff to 31 residents).
 - Financial exploitation cases are increasing.
 - Successfully recovered majority of resident's deposit after 7-month effort.
- **North Central**
 - Facility "blitz" underway.
 - Increased focus on Transfer/Discharge protections.
- **First Coast / Panhandle**
 - Staffing shortages.
 - District Manager hire in progress for Panhandle.
- **Southwest**
 - Higher acuity residents.
 - Contract staffing impacting continuity of care.
 - Positive feedback on staff responsiveness.
- **Treasure Coast**
 - Significant volunteer shortage (particularly Vero Beach).
 - Unable to meet nursing home visitation quota.
 - Concerns about limited nursing licenses cited by ALFs.
- **Palm Beach**
 - Documentation of extensive additional resident charges beyond base rates.
- **Broward**
 - 239 ALFs, 7 Adult Family Care Homes, 33 Nursing Homes.
 - 17 volunteers covering ~13,000 beds.
 - Temporary extreme staffing shortages.
 - Minimal staffing regulations identified as legislative priority.

6. Advocacy Priorities Identified

- Minimal staffing requirements.
 - Transfer/Discharge protections.
 - Corporate ownership accountability.
 - Financial exploitation and added fee structures.
 - Memory care oversight.
 - Resident protection amid increasing acuity.
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7. New Business

- District data summaries (Oct–Dec) distributed, including:
 - Facility counts.
 - Certified ombudsmen.
 - Volunteers in training.
 - Vacancies.
 - Routine visits.
 - Cases handled.
 - Council will continue reviewing district trends collectively.
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8. Adjournment (12:00 pm)

- No further questions.
- Meeting concluded.