

OREGON TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

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Testimony of Arthur Towers
In Regard to Senate Bills 19, 20 and 274
Before the
Senate Committee on Human Services
January 22, 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these bills. As you know, the members of the Oregon Trial Lawyers Association fight for underdogs. In this instance, we are fighting for the rights of Oregonians with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and their families. We are also concerned that residents of adult foster care have their rights protected.

We broadly support these efforts to expand and improve the services for people with developmental disabilities. Particularly, we support the expansion of the list of mandatory reporters and the effort to expand services to 14 to 17 year olds.

We also support tighter regulation of services and for people with developmental disabilities, and adult foster care in general. Sadly, a growing number of our members see more and more vulnerable Oregonians seeking legal assistance after experiencing abuse or the abuse of loved ones.

We want to express our concern about any effort to limit services with people with IQs from 70 to 75.

We also want to express our interest in making sure that the right to self-advocate is protected. In general terms, we are concerned about any efforts to limit the Constitutional rights of Oregonians with intellectual or developmental disabilities. We want to make sure that legislative changes maximize the opportunity for clients and their families to hold wrongdoers accountable without being absolutely required to rely on the state to impose penalties. The 7th Amendment right to a trial by jury should be sacrosanct, especially for people whose ability to self-advocate has often been stymied. In our initial review of the bills, we think that these bills are on the right track. We look forward to serving on the workgroup to improve services.