



Real Choice Initiative

PEER MENTORS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Real Choice Initiative
2475 SE Ladd Ave. Ste. 320
Portland, OR 97214

February 4, 2019

Co- Chair Nosse, Co-Chair Beyer, and members of the committee,

The Real Choice Initiative is an organization created by people with disabilities to support people with disabilities to access housing and supports in settings that best match their life goals. We support individuals to know about their options and their right to choose among settings and advocate with them to implement changes they want. We are concerned with ensuring that people with disabilities are able to access the least restrictive settings available to them, consistent with the *Olmstead* decision, as well as ensuring that congregate settings allow individuals their personal freedom and choice, as mandated by HCBS standards.

Advocacy is the only means to make sure that individuals' rights are respected. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman and the Residential Facilities Ombudsman are integral programs that provide pathways for individuals to advocate for themselves and advocate on behalf of individuals when necessary.

As the director of an organization that primarily works with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, I am grateful to be able to offer RFO as a resource when someone has been unable to go into the community for weeks on end because of inadequate staffing, for example. The people that RFO serves often have few social connections and are most at-risk when they share about things that are going wrong where they live. RFO fulfills an important function as an advocacy body and ensures that providers meet their obligations to clients.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Allen Hines
Director
Real Choice Initiative