



Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage

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Regarding SB5520

Thank-you for allowing me to submit written testimony for SB5520. I am testifying in support of SB5520 declaring an emergency with the Long-term care ombudsmen and public guardian and conservator program(s). Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage (EOSSB) represents 470 individuals who experience Intellectual Disabilities and Developmental Disabilities (ID/DD) in 13 Eastern Oregon Counties. Our agency represents some of the most vulnerable individuals in our communities who are often subjected to abuse, neglect, exploited for financial gain, and who sometimes experience self-neglect which rises to the level of needing a public guardian.

The Oregon Public Guardian's office has provided invaluable assistance over the past two years in resolving two unique cases where family members previously appointed as guardian(s) by separate courts needed to be removed due to severe detriment and neglect of the protected person(s).

The first such case required the Oregon Public Guardian to coordinate at a very involved level over the period of 10 months with EOSSB over a parent who absconded from the State of Oregon with the protected person, pulled the person from school, was not properly administering seizure medications, and isolated the person from his community to his detriment.. The guardian was a paid personal support worker who was financially reliant on the protected person's Social Security Benefit and Medicaid payments made to the parent/guardian for the care of the protected person. Oregon Public Guardian worked with EOSSB, the court in Oregon where guardianship was first appointed to the parent/guardian, the State of Oregon Office of Developmental Disability services, another state's court system, law enforcement in the other state, law enforcement in Oregon, other family members in Oregon, potential foster providers in Oregon, a transportation company that would transport the protected person back to Oregon, and other various community partners. Oregon Public Guardian sent a public deputy to the other state at their own expense to provide direct support to the protected person to get him back here safely. If not for Oregon Public Guardian's advocacy and dogged determination we would never have successfully been able to intercede on behalf of this person, who now resides in a foster home in Oregon and is living life to the fullest potential.

The second case involved another person whose legal guardian, a family member, removed him from his chosen foster home placement. The appointed guardian was unaware of how to care for the protected person, made decisions that were detrimental to him, isolated him, and did not adequately address health, safety, and disability related needs. This resulted in injuries requiring on-going medical treatment, involvement of law enforcement, and involvement of protective services. The

guardian was a paid personal support worker who was financially reliant on the protected person's Social Security Benefit and Medicaid payments made to the guardian for his care. Oregon Public Guardian was invaluable in coordinating with the assigned Oregon court, EOSSB, the Office of Developmental Disability Services, other appointed legal counsel, and another Case Management agency that was involved to successfully advocate for the termination of the appointed guardian and the appointment of Oregon Public Guardian as the temporary guardian until the final determination could be made. The protected person has been returned, per his choice, to his previous foster home, where he is thriving.

Oregon Public Guardian only becomes involved in situations where there is significant risk to the person's health and safety, where no other viable alternative for guardianship exists, and only when it's been shown the person is not able to act for themselves. Oregon Public Guardianship maintains a very high threshold that needs to be met prior to their involvement. Case Management Entities throughout the state need a resource to access in dire situations such as this. Currently Oregon Public Guardian has reached their capacity and they are unable to take on additional cases. They need additional funds to provide the level of coordination, staffing, and legal advocacy it takes to deal with these very complicated situations. As a Case Management entity, we often have no resources to turn to when someone is in immediate danger and are requesting the joint ways and means committee consider additional emergency funding that allows Oregon Public Guardianship to assist in situations where individuals who experience ID/DD are at imminent risk. We often represent Oregon's most vulnerable people, and we need resources to effectively address situations that require the intervention of Oregon's public guardian.

I humbly thank-you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of HB5520.