

I am writing in support of SB 572 because it addresses the problem of young immigrants who would otherwise be eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status but age out of eligibility before a guardian can be appointed. One barrier faced by these immigrants is that the process of appointing a guardian can take a long time due to the requirement to serve notice on parents and other persons. Sometimes young immigrants do not even know if their parents are alive, much less have their contact information. Even when such information is known, the postal systems in the countries where their parents reside are often very slow and extremely unreliable. Alternative means of serving the required notices, such as service by publication, require obtaining approval from the court and can take months to complete.

SB 572 will implement a thoughtful approach to addressing this problem and provide a solution for a class of immigrants that I have found are highly likely to become desirable contributors to our country. To the extent that I have a concern about the bill, it would be to suggest that the requirement in section 10 be amended to read “to *reasonably* encourage the development of maximum self-reliance and independence . . .” Such an amendment would make clear that judges have the degree of leeway needed to ensure that guardianships are designed to fit the particular circumstances of individual respondents and guardians.

It was never the intent of Oregon’s guardianship statutes to impose barriers to protecting vulnerable youth. Passage of SB 572 would constitute a compassionate step forward in protecting young members of society and provide them with a path forward at a critical time in their lives.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

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