



March 10, 2021

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

RE: Support for the Residential Facilities Ombudsman

Dear Co-Chairs Keiber and Nosse and members of the Committee,

The Arc Oregon has enjoyed a longstanding, collaborative relationship with the Residential Facilities Ombudsman (RFO) and I am pleased to submit this letter to support the continuation and full funding of the excellent work of the RFO.

For over 65 years The Arc of Oregon has provided advocacy, support, and services to people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. We also support and represent nine local chapters of The Arc serving thousands of Oregonians with I/DD and their families across the state. Our mission is promoting and defending the human rights of people with I/DD and actively supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes. We envision a world in which all persons have the support and opportunities they need for personal development and independence, interdependence with family and friends, and inclusion in the community.

Many of the people we support in our programs across the state live in homes and facilities licensed or certified by the State of Oregon, including more than 60 people with I/DD for whom we serve as professional legal guardian. While our advocates have close relationships with the people we support, we cannot be always in all places and have experienced even greater challenges throughout this pandemic. We greatly appreciate and value the work the RFO program does in helping to ensure the safety and well-being of the people supported through our programs and view RFO as a trusted partner.

The RFO program provides a much needed and welcome layer of oversight while also advocating for and with people to build a quality of life that is meaningful to each individual. The role of the RFO program has been especially important during the pandemic as the needs of people who are feeling isolated have become more intense. The RFO program showed great ingenuity in finding creative ways to support people with reduced personal contact and has played a key role in identifying and raising awareness about the systemic issues that contribute to common problems found within the residential service system such as visitor restrictions, involuntary move-outs, retaliation, access to food, and ADA accommodations.

We look forward to RFO's continued work in addressing concerns and supporting the needs of people living in residential facilities across Oregon and adamantly believe that full funding for this program is essential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patricia Boga', written over a circular stamp or seal.

Patricia Boga
Executive Director

Achieve with us.