



**ROBERT A. WAGNER**  
**SENATE MAJORITY LEADER**

To: House Subcommittee on Civil Law  
From: Senator Rob Wagner  
Date: Thursday, May 6, 2021  
Re: Support for SB 572

Chair Power, Vice Chair Wallan, and members of the committee,

For the record, I'm Rob Wagner. I'm the State Senator for District 19, representing areas of the tri-counties - Lake Oswego, SW Portland, Tualatin, and West Linn.

I write today in strong support of Senate Bill 572, which passed the Senate on a 23-3 vote in March. The bill makes technical fixes to Oregon's guardianship laws to allow for youth to access federal support that has been available for over 30 years for 18-21 year olds, but not in Oregon.

During the 2020 legislative session, an identical version of Senate Bill 572 passed on the Senate floor on a 28-0 vote, and was unanimously recommended for passage by the House Judiciary Committee. The bill was Senate Bill 1568 - if you want to review the legislative record on OLIS.

Unfortunately, the House was unable to vote on the bill during the short legislative session last year.

Over the past three years of conversations to pass this bill, working with a broad swath of organizations, including my attorney constituent Susan Dussault, I've learned about the gaps in Oregon's immigration and guardianship systems.

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed a federal law that provided protection and support for immigrant youth up to the age of 21, who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned by their parents, allowing them to remain in the US. It is important that we pass SB 572 this session, allowing Oregon's vulnerable youth between the ages of 18 and 21 to ask an Oregon court to appoint a trusted adult as their guardian and provide access to federal support during those crucial years.

Our hope is to fix this error in Oregon law and join other western states such as Washington, California, and Colorado that have made similar fixes.

The bill would help protect an estimated 70-100 vulnerable youth in Oregon each year, reducing youth homelessness, human trafficking, and reliance on public resources. I want to briefly share a story that has stuck with me since last year's public hearings on this bill.

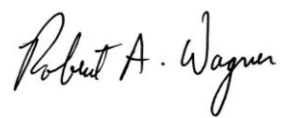


Maria was born in Honduras but was forced to flee her home country at the age of 14 after her parents passed away and her life was turned upside down. Escaping the threat of gang and sexual violence, she came to live with a family friend in Oregon. Working with an attorney, Maria attempted to have the friend appointed as her guardian, but was not able to because she had narrowly missed Oregon's guardianship age cut off.

For vulnerable youth in our state, appointing a trusted adult as their guardian helps them to avoid adverse experiences like homelessness and trafficking. Youth like Maria are particularly vulnerable to incidents of abuse and violence, which compounds any trauma they have already experienced. We have an opportunity to make a simple legal change that will make a huge difference in the lives of youth like Maria.

I urge your support for the bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert A. Wagner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "R".