



January 27, 2023

To: Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senator Sara Gelser-Blouin, Member
Senator James Manning, Jr., Member

Senator Kim Thatcher, Vice-Chair
Senator Dennis Linthicum, Member

From: Natasha Atkinson, Executive Director, Umpqua Homes Inc. (UHI)

RE: **Support** for Senate Bill **528**

UHI supports over 40 individuals who experience Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) in Douglas County. Many of those served have either a Lifetime Guardian or a Health Care Advocate (HCA).

Supporting those who have a guardian or HCA, we often see a true partnership that helps to ensure the wants, needs and desires of those we serve. This relationship can be very advantageous and cooperative. These are the relationships that both those working and those served by UHI strive towards. Unfortunately, this is not always the case with our current system of lifetime guardianship.

SB 528 addresses concerns with the current system, here in Oregon. With the existing system we have experienced guardian overreach. Specifically, limiting the rights and choices of those they serve as guardian. As people age and gain experiences, they are often not the same as they were at 18, 19, 20 or even 35. We have often partnered with the ARC of Oregon and the Oregon Resource Association to discuss how best to advocate for those we serve, as their guardian is no longer representing their wants, needs or desires.

Our current system does not take into account the fact that those we serve grow, change, learn new skills, and increase both self-determination and decision-making abilities. Often through this growth, the person may require less support from their guardian and at times, they would prefer to serve as their own guardian. Currently, these requests are repeatedly dismissed and/or not honored.

Please **support SB 528**. This will help to ensure that people are the focus of guardianship here in Oregon.