



Gerald Cohen, Legislative Advocacy Volunteer

Testimony in support of SB 5512: POP 102

Joint Committee on Ways & Means – Subcommittee on Public Safety

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AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With over 500,000 members in Oregon, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families, with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. This includes fighting to support America’s 41 million family caregivers who help make it possible for older Americans and other loved ones to live independently at home—where they want to be.

We are testifying in support of the Oregon Justice Department’s POP 102 and allocation of \$790,000 in General Funds. AARP has been engaged on issues of improving the protection of vulnerable people since the inception of the Working Interdisciplinary Networks of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS) in 2013. I was one of the founders of WINGS and currently serve on the WINGS Steering Committee. I also serve on the ACL Elder Justice Grant Advisory Committee for the 2-year federal pilot project grant and it supports POP 102.

With over 2,000 cases added annually in Oregon and with many cases remaining open over many years, the court is responsible for monitoring over \$1.2 billion in assets. The high case load puts real constraints on the courts’ ability to provide regular, thorough review of guardian and conservator actions in cases involving protected person.

We are seeing real benefits from the pilot project. It is providing a systematic approach to improve data collection and utilization processes, training and tools to probate judges and staff and financial auditing oversight of conservatorship activity. Approving this funding package will allow the phased in continuation of this vital program once the grant funds expire. We urge allocation of funds to support the POP 102 request.