

SB 380 TESTIMONY in SUPPORT



The basic summary of the concept is as follows:

The bill would provide additional funding for the Oregon Public Guardian (OPG) (~\$1.7 million) to increase caseload capacity (at least 80 additional clients), and that additional capacity would be reserved for persons that are either facing an “aid and assist” process or who recently went through that process in the previous 1 year. It would also require OPG to work collaboratively with District Attorney offices, county behavioral health programs and Oregon Health Authority/Oregon State Hospital on those referrals and cases.

Through guardianship, OPG is able to assist adults with significant cognitive deficits that have been chronically cycling between homelessness, criminal conduct, jail, OSH and then back to homelessness. OPG assists by securing and coordinating all necessary services and supports for the person, including housing and caregiving. Once our protected persons have their needs met and are taken care of there is an almost complete elimination of the types of incidents that led to their prior arrests.

Doing nothing for these incapacitated persons is actually more expensive to the system than making a limited investing in OPG. When these individuals continue to go without guardianship, they continue to stay in the same chronic cycle that leads to a high burden on local law enforcement, hospitals, OSH, and the courts.

As a member of the Residential Ombudsman Program and Public Guardian Advisory Board (ROPGAB), I am glad to see this proposal raised by one of the key players in dealing with the mentally ill and others requiring public services who are having unsatisfactory interfaces with the public (for example: criminal trespass, menacing, theft, assault). This proposal is a win for those needing services as well as those adversely impacted by those with unmet needs.

Please let me know if I may provide additional information about his solution.

Mark M. Williams
ROPGAB Board member