



Your Life. Your Voice.

January 25, 2023

To: Senator Prozanski, Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Gabrielle Guedon, Executive Director, Oregon Self Advocacy Coalition

RE: Support for Senate Bill 528

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Senator Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Self Advocacy Coalition (OSAC) is a statewide nonprofit organization made up of people experiencing intellectual or developmental disabilities. We also have 18 local self-advocacy member groups in communities around Oregon. We support people to advocate in all aspects of their lives. Guardianship and supported decision making is important to us because we believe that with the right tools and support, we can make choices to lead healthy and safe lives in our communities.

Communities are strongest when people lead self-determined lives. Self-determination means making decisions for your own life. When people with disabilities have the right supports in place, we know they can make decisions in to live the life they choose. We support SB 528 because it will provide choices for people with disabilities to try less restrictive options before they are appointed a guardian.

We have a member who shared their story with us. They live in their own apartment and their parents are their guardians. Recently their guardians changed their service provider. That means the people who came into their apartment to support them in cooking and other goals every day changed. This wasn't what the person wanted or chose. This member shared with us that they would like to have their parents support them "in medical areas of their life but they would not like them to be their guardians anymore".

SB 528 also requires that when someone with a disability has a guardian, they would check in every 5 years to see if that is still the right choice. Sometimes it might be and sometimes it might not be, but it is important that someone's legal rights are not taken away forever. We all learn new things and gain new skills. Our lives can change a lot in 5 years and so can we. It is important that we don't have our rights to make our own legal decisions taken away permanently when we are 18 years old. Checking in with us every 5 years allows us to make a decision, along with those who care about us.

Please support SB 528 and allow choice and self-determination for Oregonians with IDD.