



Oregon

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TO: Senate Committee on Human Services
FROM: The Oregon Public Guardian & Conservator
DATE: February 10th, 2025

RE: SB 794

Chair Gelsler Blouin and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services,

I am writing today to request that you help pass SB 794. This bill would allow the Oregon Public Guardian & Conservator program (OPG) to have multiple additional options for helping support highly vulnerable adults with decision-making, including options that are voluntary and less restrictive than guardianship.

Currently, under Oregon law, OPG is only authorized to provide court appointed guardian or conservator services, which are the most restrictive forms of decision-making supports. Guardianship involves an intensive and expensive court process which removes a person's right to make their own decisions and hands over that power to the guardian. While guardianship is an important option and is needed for many highly vulnerable adults at high risk of harm or death, it is not the right option for everyone in need and there are many other options that if available would be more appropriate some.

All too often, when the OPG team is accessing individuals for potential guardianship services we are encountering people with some level of cognitive impairment that do recognize they need help, want someone to help them and would be willing to sign up for help, if they only could. With these cases, OPG only has two current options, go through a court process that would unnecessarily remove their right to make their own decisions, or decline to serve them entirely, because generally someone that understands they need help, and wants to accept that help doesn't usually meet the legal definition of "incapacitated" which is required to establish a guardianship. Both these options are inappropriate and a lose-lose for the individuals. The additional options in SB 794 would allow OPG to serve these individuals in a way that they could choose for themselves and would not remove their rights to make decisions. A win-win.

Please consider passing SB 794 into law.

Respectfully,

Chris Rosin, JD, NCG
The Oregon Public Guardian & Conservator