



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Residential Ombudsman & Public Guardian Advisory Board

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February 28, 2025

To: The House Ways and Means Joint Subcommittee on Human Services

Re: HB 5020 Support

As members of the Oregon Residential Ombudsman Public Guardian Advisory Board (ROPGAB), we are writing in strong support of HB 5020, a bill that creates the Agency Budget and appropriates monies from the General Fund to the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OLTCO).

The ROPGAB oversees Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OLTCO) including its programs of the Residential Facilities Ombudsman (RFO), the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) and the Oregon Public Guardian (OPG). The statutory directives for the Board also include advising the Legislative Assembly on issues related to the agency, its programs, and the Oregonians served by the agency. The ROPGAB Board members represent decades of experience in geriatrics, mental health care, brain injury, long-term care, elder law, guardianship, advocacy for individuals with disabilities and, as caregivers ourselves.

- Funding requested is included in the Governor's Recommended Budget
- Request for funding for five OPG positions makes permanent the limited duration positions approved in the 2024 legislative session
- OPG limited duration positions have already shown results:
 - 50 cases referred to OPG from hospital discharge planners
 - 44% resulted in OPG petitioning for guardianship
 - 56% resulted in less restrictive alternatives to guardianship found thanks to OPG assistance

While not included in the Governor's Recommended Budget, the ROPGAB Board encourages legislators to consider additional funding for the Residential Facilities Ombudsman Program. RFO's mission of supporting Oregonians with ID/DD and mental health issues aligns with several of the Governor's priorities. Since the program's inception in 2013, the RFO program

The Residential Ombudsman & Public Guardian Advisory Board monitors the agency, the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and advises the Governor and Legislature pursuant to ORS 441.416-418. Seven members are appointed by the Governor and four by the Legislative Leadership.

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has seen a 46% increase in the population served and an increase of 76% of the number of facilities that the RFO program covers with 0% increased staffing or funding. With additional mental health services coming online per the Governor's priorities, the RFO program is proven and irreplaceable in providing critical services to extremely vulnerable Oregonians.

We urge you to pass HB 5020 in this legislative session and are available for testimony or additional information if needed. Thank you for considering these vital services.

Sincerely,



Mark Williams
ROPGAB Board Chair