



March 11, 2025

To: Sen Gelser Blouin, Chair, Senate Committee on Human Services
From: Katie Rose, Executive Director, Oregon Community Brokerages
Re: Support for SB 1065, establishing Oregon's Center for Decision-Making Supports

Chair Gelser Blouin and members of the committee,

Oregon Community Brokerages is comprised of the 14 Support Service Brokerages across Oregon. Collectively, we provide case management services to nearly 8,000 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) living in their own or family homes in every community throughout the state. We connect people with what matters to them and support them to make the important decisions and choices that shape lives.

Living life involves making complex decisions. In Oregon, we value choice, and with choice comes the process of understanding options, considering impacts, and weighing outcomes. That is not always something that we can do alone. When people with IDD ask for help with decisions, they are sometimes disallowed from being the authority in their own life choices. By defining decision-making support and creating a centralized location to access decision-making resources and information, Oregon will ensure that people with IDD can get the support they need to make life decisions.

SB 1065 defines decision-making support as the "individualized process of supporting and accommodating an individual who is an adult with a disability to enable the individual to make life decisions without impeding the individual's self-determination." That looks different for different people. While some people opt for a more formalized written decision-making support plan that proactively outlines specific details, most seek decision-making support when a major life decision presents itself. A person may identify the types of decisions that will trigger support, and who should be involved. For example, a person who works and is able to move through most daily living routines independently may still need support with decisions related to financial planning and maintaining their benefits.

To consolidate and build resources for decision-making support, SB 1065 establishes a center housed within the state's Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman. The center will provide a clear access point for people seeking to learn more about their options for

decision-making support. Choices are a positive feature of our system, but having a simple way of accessing those options and resources makes it easier for people to do so.

People with IDD face some major choice points in common across their lives, and Oregon has different types and levels of formal supports that a person can choose to put in place to work through those choices. These are alluded to in the bill: “youth transitioning to adulthood and independence, guardianships, supported decision-making, health care directives, powers of attorney and other alternatives to guardianships.” Our values of self-direction and self-determination point us toward people making their own choices with the most individual authority that is desirable and safe for them to exercise. Too often we know that people with IDD and their families choose the most restrictive option of full legal guardianship because it is the option that is most widely known and understood. Establishing a center tasked with collecting and sharing out information about targeted support options will increase people’s ability to know and understand the tools available to them.

The work of the center for decision-making supports is outlined in the bill: “To provide referrals to advocacy organizations, referrals for legal assistance or other forms of technical assistance; To enhance cross-agency collaboration on guardianship issues to improve service delivery and support,” and to “inform the public about the center’s services and shall make the information described in this section available online.” Too often in Oregon’s human services community people are not aware of and cannot find information on the targeted, most appropriate services available. The services themselves are there, but the individual resources are not organized or visible enough to the public that needs them. Creating a one-stop resource to learn about and become connected to decision-making supports will make the most of what Oregon has to offer.

Oregon Community Brokerages encourages support for SB 1065. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments in favor of establishing a center for decision-making support.