



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

## Residential Facilities Ombudsman Program

Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

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To: Chair Gelser Blouin and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee

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From: Leslie Sutton, Residential Facilities Ombudsman

RE: Support for SB 1065

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Chair Gelser Blouin and Members of the Committee:

The Residential Facilities Ombudsman uses advocacy to create change in people's lives and system policy so that people with disabilities can live full lives in Oregon's communities. We support people with developmental disabilities or mental health conditions who live in foster homes or residential facilities.

Most likely, everyone will need support to make decisions at some point in their lives. These supports range from powers of attorney or healthcare directives to guardianship or conservatorship. For people trying to support someone with making decisions, it is very confusing to know which tool to use and how to use it. In residential facilities, we see people with disabilities, staff and families trying to navigate decision making each day. Without the proper tools and support specific to the person's needs, conflicts and confusion can make it more difficult for the person to get what they need and live a life with self-determination.

Currently, there is no single place to get information about the various tools to support people to make decisions or how to use these tools. In the absence of information, people are at risk of not getting the support they need. SB 1065 would create a Center for Decision Making Supports that would provide information and education to any person with a disability, their family members or people who are supporting them about decision making tools. The Center would also provide referrals to advocacy or legal organizations as needed. We envision the Center providing written, website or video materials on all the various ways to support Oregonians to make decisions, plus engage in trainings for groups or 1:1 with families as needed.

SB 1065 also defines supported decision making as "an 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." We support the pending amendments that will further clarify that a supporter is not the decision-maker and does not have authority to make decisions or act on behalf of the individual. This amendment clarifies the Supported Decision Making boundaries in a manner consistent with the intent of supported decision making which focuses on the person with a disability maintaining their decision-making authority.

Thank you for the attention to supporting people with disabilities in decision-making by creating a Center for Decision Making Support in Oregon.