



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

## Residential Ombudsman & Public Guardian Advisory Board

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April 23, 2025

To: House Committee on Judiciary

Re: HB 2481-2 Support

As members of the Oregon Residential Ombudsman Public Guardian Advisory Board, we are writing in strong support of HB 2481-2, a bill that allows the Oregon Public Guardian and Conservator to develop and administer a program to provide guardianship services to defendants whose criminal cases have been suspended or dismissed pursuant to ORS 161.370 due to the defendant lacking fitness to proceed (Aid & Assist).

ROPGAB oversees the 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.

ROPGAB supports this amendment to HB 2481-2 to help resolve some of the current issues with Aid & Assist in Oregon:

- OPG is a well-trusted program that has a successful track record of helping individuals with complex needs divert from a chronic cycle of unsupported homelessness, arrest, aid and assist, a finding of never able, and a return to homelessness.
- Through public guardianship, OPG is able to establish housing, behavioral health supports, medical care, and personal care. With these services in place, individuals can stabilize and stop engaging in behaviors that lead to arrest.
- Public guardianship allows very difficult defendants to move to appropriate and more just levels of service which can better meet their needs and increase public safety.
- Very difficult defendants can include those at risk of being found "not able"; those who are tough to service in the community; those who commit repetitive acts and are in frequent contact with the Courts.
- The Oregon Public Guardian is a program of limited resources with very small available caseload capacity to serve more aid and assist connected individuals. With a small investment in the program through HB 2481-2 the program could serve significantly more people.

We urge you to pass HB 2481-2 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

### Board Members:

Mark Williams,

**Chair**

*Eugene*

Melanie St. John,

**Vice-Chair**

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Diana Allen

*Corvallis*

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*Molalla*

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*Bend*