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Chair Williams
Vice-Chair Leif, Vice-Chair Ruiz
Members of the House Committee on Human Services

RE: HB 2105-2 – Relating to alternatives to protective proceedings

Chair Williams, Vice-Chair Leif, Vice-Chair Ruiz, and members of the Committee,

FACT Oregon is the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, designated Parent Training Information (PTI) Center, serving families as they navigate Special Education services. Providing peer delivered support, training, and resources, we equip and empower families of youth experiencing disability to have high expectations as they pursue whole, full lives in community.

When a family understands the importance of self-determination, independence, and supported decision-making they celebrate their child reaching the age of majority as achievement of a beautiful milestone and not the abrupt presence of a dire cliff. The dire cliff is the occurrence of what has been referred to as the “*school to guardianship pipeline*.” **FACT Oregon supports HB 2105-2** as it meets our immediate need to slow the “*school to guardianship pipeline*” by ensuring parents are aware of supported decision-making as a lesser alternative to guardianship.

The Developmental Disabilities Act states “*disability is a natural part of the human experience that does not diminish the right of individuals with developmental disabilities to live independently, to exert control and choice over their own lives, and to fully participate in and contribute to their communities through full integration and inclusion in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of United States society.*” (Public Law 106-402, 106th Congress 2000).

Despite this, data shares that 58% of youth with IDD between the ages of 18-21 already have guardians in place. Sharing alternatives to guardianship, including supported decision-making, should be part of IEP meetings. There is movement toward student lead IEP meetings, which is a great way to instill self-determination. Add to that instruction in self-advocacy and supported decision-making, and we can ensure that youth have every opportunity to retain their decision-making rights into adulthood.

Supported decision-making is not a novel concept. Many states are further along than Oregon in their recognition of its potential, and while we **support HB 2015-2**, we note that there is more to do to fully implement supported decision-making in Oregon. We look forward to working with stakeholders and partners to further efforts to protect and maintain the decision-making rights of individuals with IDD.

Thank you for your consideration,
Roberta Dunn, FACT Oregon