

SENATE BILL 626

Renames Long Term Care Ombudsman as Ombudsman for Vulnerable Adults

and

Renames Office of Long Term Care Ombudsman as Office of Ombudsman for Vulnerable Adults

Chair _____, members of the committee . . .

My name is Edward R. Mason, 20251 Hoodview Avenue, West Linn, OR 97068 and I represent myself, parent of a mentally ill adult.

I support Senate Bill 626. I believe that our mentally ill and developmentally disabled populations deserve to have representation by an ombudsman. This Bill would expand the current title and office to include these two groups.

My son, Hanson, lives at a residential care facility in Oregon. At the present time, he has no ombudsman to voice his concerns to, nor do I, as his parent, have anyone I can contact, over and above the County, if I believe that his care or well-being is compromised. There are two instances that I believe fall right into the justification for this new position and office. First, Hanson is diagnosed with schizophrenia and it is imperative that he be on daily medication. When he arrived at this facility, he was on medication dosages that were too high and which left him in a very impaired state. I was not able to advocate for him by accessing his prescribing physician, nor did the residential facility's staff feel they could step in on his behalf. Thus, I was left with no recourse or means to remedy this situation. If there had been an ombudsman whom I could have contacted, possibly this situation could have been remedied. Second, the facility's goal is to train the residents to be able to achieve independent living. In Hanson's case, each time he has attained an independent living situation, he stops taking his medication and eventually is committed back into the state hospital. Again, I believe an ombudsman, would be a valuable asset in obtaining the care he needs, and is entitled to.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.