



April 14, 2013

Chairs Bates, Nathenson, and members of the Committee:

SEIU Local 503 Urges your support for SB 626A

SB 626A - Expanding the Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman to Oregonians with development disabilities and mental illness.

The Problem

Oregon has a model long term care ombudsman program for seniors and people with physical disabilities who receive long term care services in residential facilities (nursing homes, adults foster homes, and assisted living facilities). The ombudsman is an independent state agency that visits these facilities regularly and advocates for the residents. With a small paid staff and over 200 volunteers the LTC Ombudsman office is able to visit thousands of facilities and residents each month and respond to hundreds of calls from the community.

Currently, Oregonians with developmental disabilities or mental illness do not have an independent ombudsman program. There is no independent state agency to respond to resident complaints and concerns and no independent monitor visiting residents on a regular bases to insure their safety and protection.

SB 626 provides advocacy for Oregonians with developmental disabilities or mental illness.

* SB 626 would expand the current ombudsman's duties to include the needs of Oregonians with developmental disabilities or mental illness who receive care in residential facilities.

It is vital we offer the same protections to individuals with developmental disabilities and mental illness receiving care in residential settings as we do for seniors and people with physical disabilities. The Office of The Long Term Care Ombudsman has been extremely effective in protecting and advocating for seniors and it could do the same wonderful work for others in residential settings. Please support SB 626A.

Sincerely,

Megan Moyer

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