



March 14, 2013

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Representative Carolyn Tomei, Chair
House Human Services and Housing Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chairwoman Tomei:

AARP Oregon supports passage of House Bill 2671.

With people living longer and increased age often accompanied by diminished decision-making ability, there is often a need for the courts to transfer authority for property or personal decision-making of the individual to others. As the need for guardians grown, courts have found it more difficult to find family or friends able and willing to accept the responsibilities of guardianship. And whether the court-appointed guardian is a family member or fiduciary professional, these arrangements carry risk and require careful scrutiny.

There is a need to improve the quality of guardianship and prevent abuses, and to focus attention on the need to train guardians and certify professional fiduciaries to ensure that all are better informed about their responsibilities and the requirements for caring for incapacitated people.

HB 2671 creates the State Office of the Public Guardian and Conservator to provide public guardian services. These services may include information, assistance, legal representation and services such as a court-appointed fiduciary in guardianship or conservatorship proceedings. The bill requires the State Office to certify and train public guardians and conservators as well as develop a volunteer program to assist the office.

AARP Oregon commends the work of the Joint Interim Task Force on Public Guardian and Conservator and their report issued in December 2012. The work of the task force and HB 2671 are in keeping with AARP public policy on public guardianship. We urge your support of HB 2671.

Sincerely,

Rick Bennett
Director, Government Relations
AARP Oregon