

To: Chair Carolyn Tomei, members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing

RE: Support for HB 2671, Creating the State Office of the Public Guardian and Conservator

**Oregon Chapter
Portland**
1650 NW Naito Pkwy
Suite 190
Portland, OR 97209
503.416.0201 p

The Alzheimer's Association Oregon Chapter urges you to support HB 2671, which creates a new State Office of the Public Guardian and Conservator. This is a desperately needed service for thousands of Oregonians who need a guardian who can't afford one or have no capable or willing family members to serve as one.

Eugene
1000 Willagillespie Rd
Suite 100
Eugene, OR 97401
541.345.8392 p

Many of the people who need guardian or conservator services are individuals with advanced Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia. These are vulnerable members of our communities and cannot make informed decisions about their care plans or their finances. Unfortunately many of these individuals also don't have the financial means to pay for a private guardian or conservator, nor do they have a capable or willing member of their family to serve in that capacity. This is why a public guardian program is so important.

Public guardian programs have been working successfully in Multnomah County and in other states for many years. Best practices have been developed that keep in mind the best interests of those who are served by the program.

The creation of this new office will complement the efforts already underway to improve the skills of court appointed guardians in Oregon. During the process of crafting the State Plan for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias in Oregon (SPADO), we identified the problem that often family members serving as guardians do not know much about being a guardian, and professional guardians know little about Alzheimer's. SPADO called for the creation of a training program for guardians, and a work group has formed to craft this protocol.

Public guardians and better trained guardians will lead to better individualized care and more protections for people living with advanced dementia. The Alzheimer's Association Oregon Chapter supports this legislation for the benefit it will bring to our most vulnerable citizens.