

February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015

TO: Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee  
Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair  
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FROM: Jon Bartholomew, Government Relations Director, AARP Oregon

RE: AARP Support for SB 471

AARP Oregon is pleased to offer our support for SB 471, which would provide for legal representation for a person who is proposed to be assigned a conservator or guardian. This legislation is needed to ensure that some of Oregon's most vulnerable individuals are afforded the right to have their interests represented from the start of a court protective proceeding.

Protective proceedings occur when someone's capacity is reduced to the point at which their decision-making capacity is brought into question and are considered unable to take care of themselves. However, our current system does not provide for these individuals to have representation during court protective proceedings. Arguably, these are the people who most need someone to be looking out for their interests during this process.

Resulting problems from not having legal representation during a proceeding can include:

- The failure to identify a potentially abusive or neglectful guardian/conservator;
- The inability to remove an abusive or neglecting guardian/conservator; and
- Awarding the guardian/conservator greater decision-making authority than the protected person requires, thereby reducing the rights and independence of that person unnecessarily.

AARP Oregon urges your support for SB 471.