

**February 4, 2016**

**Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair  
Senate Committee on Judiciary**

## **AARP Support for Advance Directives bill, SB 1552**

AARP recognizes that when adults lack decision-making capacity or the ability to communicate their decisions, the duty to decide on treatment falls to others. Although this may raise ethical considerations, concern for the individual's wishes, values, and welfare remains at the heart of surrogate decision-making. The most crucial questions are who should make treatment decisions for incapacitated adults and what criteria they should use in making those decisions. Policymakers should support programs to help patients plan their advanced care and create clear, comprehensive advance health care directives to be shared with providers and loved ones.

Laws of this nature should be flexible regarding patient preferences in unpredictable circumstances and protective of appropriate end-of-life interventions. Oregon has been a leader in the creation of advance directives as well as Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)-a specific protocol which translates the wishes of patients with advanced chronic progressive illness into medical orders that health care systems understand. But specific to advance directives, Oregon's legislation like many other states needs updating to better address the individual's values and reduce confusion as to which type of directive is most appropriate.

SB 1552 has been developed among a diverse set of stakeholders, including consumers, to better address the needs of consumers, providers and families/caregivers. The work group incorporated lessons learned over many years on best practices for advance directives and processes to keep the forms updated. We are pleased to have been engaged in this effort and AARP Oregon supports this legislation.

SB 1552 is an important step in addressing advance planning in one's health care treatment. We urge the Legislature to pass this bill. We also hope that as we move forward to future sessions the legislature will address other aspects of advance planning not addressed today: updating our durable power of attorney statutes in accordance with the Uniform Durable Power of Attorney Act. That model act addresses financial decision-making. The impact of those decisions has a significant bearing upon the social, physical and mental health of consumers. We leave that action to the next biennium.

On behalf of the over half million AARP members ages 50+ statewide, I urge your support for SB 1552

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerald J. Cohen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gerald J Cohen JD, MPA  
AARP Oregon State Director

---