

I would like to speak to the proposed Senate Bill 274. Due to my son's personal life's experiences; I strongly believe providing services in conjunction with the education system to people with I/DD at the starting age of 14 is imperative. My son is severely disabled with autism, rapid cycling bi-polar disorder and intellectual disabilities. Prior to our move to Oregon in 2002, he was a client in California's regional center system.

The adolescent stage was extremely difficult for him, but the services provided by the regional center during that time helped him get through that rough patch without long-term consequences. Additionally, we had the support of his regional center counselor with difficult issues during the planning and implementation of his IEP. The expertise from my son's regional center counselor provided valuable support and information, which assisted in tailoring an appropriate educational plan and setting for him.

During that time the regional center provided important information to our family in regards to long term planning. This resulted in the development of a special need's trust, limited guardianship and a comprehensive letter of intent. Our counselor also assisted us in applying for services with the Social Security Administration at 18 years of age. All of this was accomplished with greater ease and accuracy with the regional center's assistance.

My son, now 51 years of age, has beautifully reached his goal of living independently, with services provided through the Brokerage system. His life is supported in a way that is bringing him success that we never thought possible. Our experiences with services through the Brokerage system in Oregon are outstanding, far surpassing those of the former regional center system. We attribute it to person centered planning and the careful implementation of services that are aligned to the mission of the Brokerage. I can only imagine how better and more informed the lives of special education students and their families would be with the passage of SB 274.

I also believe this bill would be financially benefiting to the State in the long-range. When families have the knowledge to start planning at an early age, more thought is given to the future monetary needs of their children. This hopefully translates into taking more responsibility of the long term planning for their children with early savings, or perhaps a life-insurance policy that would be available upon the passing of the parents. It's important for all families to understand all options for the well-being of their children during their entire lives. The school alone simply doesn't provide that information and support earlier enough, but would be accomplished with the passage of SB 274.

Most sincerely,  
Jeannie Kinley  
Parent/Guardian