

Diana Allen

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DATE: March 11, 2021

TO: Joint Subcommittee on Human Services

FROM: Diana Allen

RE: Support for HB 5019

I serve as a volunteer on the Residential Ombudsman and Public Guardianship Advisory Board (ROPGAB). In our capacity as an advisory board, we provide input to the three programs within the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OLTCO):

- The Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO),
- The Residential Facilities Ombudsman (RFO), and
- The Oregon Public Guardian, and Conservator (OPGC).

ROPGAB's charge is to assist the three OLTCO programs in speaking up for the needs and defending the rights of people living in a range of residential settings including nursing homes and other long-term care settings, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, and people who rely on supports including surrogate decision-making in our state.

I am also a Certified LTC Ombudsman and volunteer in three long-term care facilities in my community. I see first-hand the powerful impact of these programs on Oregonians in need of essential services and supports. I strongly support the passage of HB 5019 and continued funding for all OLTCO programs.

One provision of HB 5019 provides for a substantial increase in funding for OPGC. ROPGAB has witnessed the monumental efforts of OPGC to provide services to the most vulnerable of Oregon's citizens. OPGC currently has a total of six staff to serve the four regions in Oregon. With current staffing levels, OPGC is at full caseload capacity serving 90 people. However, there are many Oregonians who need a guardian who cannot be served and there is a significant waiting list that has only grown over the past two years.

As an active community volunteer and family member of a resident formerly served by LTCO, I urge you to support HB 5019 and full funding for LTCO, RFO, and particularly for the funding increase for OPGC.

Sincerely,

