



Ohio Legal Rights Service

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The Honorable Louis Blessing
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
Statehouse
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: Sub SB 157

Dear Chairman Blessing:

I am writing to express the support of Ohio Legal Rights Service (OLRS) for Substitute Senate Bill 157, which will be heard by the Committee tomorrow. This bill, as you know, allows parents of adults with intellectual or cognitive disabilities to nominate in their wills a person to be the guardian of that adult child. Concern about this issue has been expressed to OLRS over the years by caring parents who are involved in the lives of their adult child, and wanted to insure that a stranger to the family would not end up being imposed as guardian.

As you know, the role of OLRS is to provide legal advocacy for people with disabilities. Many of our clients view guardianship as an unnecessary intrusion into their lives; the prevailing model for services in developmental disabilities is one that emphasizes self-determination by the person with a disability; and even Ohio law recognizes that there are less restrictive alternatives to guardianship that should be considered.

Recognizing these interests, I was pleased to have been part of a working group that resolved certain issues regarding the bill. A collaborative effort involving the Probate Judges Association, the Ohio State Bar Association, our office, and others resulted in clarification that the nominee may be appointed as guardian only after application, notice and hearing as governed by Chapter 2111. With this change OLRS is fully able to support the bill before your committee, and to recommend its prompt passage.

I have taken the liberty of circulating this letter to the members of the committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.