

March 20, 2015

Hon. Hannah-Beth Jackson  
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2187  
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Oversight Hearing on the Role of the Courts in Protecting Vulnerable Adults

Dear Senator Jackson:

You were the first public official we wrote to after we started discovering that limited conservatorship proceedings in California were routinely violating the rights of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In that letter of April 9, 2014, we made two requests: (1) for you or your staff to attend one or more of the conferences we were convening to look deeper into these problems; or (2) to speak with us so we could brief you about the deeply disturbing patterns of injustice we found emerging.

To this date, we have not received a reply to our letter. So we are reaching out to you and to the Senate Judiciary Committee again. This time we come with more than a few preliminary observations and a handful of concerns. We come with a report that contains our findings after having conducted a year-long intensive study of the way in which limited conservatorships are processed by judges, court-appointed attorneys, court investigators, and regional centers. The 10-page report, titled "*Limited Conservatorships: Systematic Denial of Access to Justice*" will be officially presented to the Judiciary Committee at the hearing on March 24. Along with it, the committee will receive a document titled "Exhibits to Report" which contains 72 pages of background materials supporting the report's findings.

When we inquired about having a scheduled time slot at the hearing to make a presentation, we were informed by your staff that the agenda was already full. We were advised that we could speak during the public comment period, so that is what we plan to do.

When you review the report and exhibits, you may conclude that the issues they raise warrant more than a two-minute presentation during public comment. We would welcome having an official place on agenda, perhaps at the end of the scheduled speakers. If not, we invite you to send these documents, or a link to them, to the currently scheduled speakers, asking them to devote some of their remarks to the issues raised in these documents – particularly those most relevant to their own missions. (<http://www.spectruminstitute.org/judiciary-report.pdf>) - (<http://spectruminstitute.org/exhibits.pdf>)

These documents are being sent to the Capitol media today. We are letting them know that we will be available to answer their questions one-half hour prior to the hearing, or immediately afterwards.

We know that the role of legislative oversight is taken seriously by the Judiciary Committee. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities – and those who advocate for them – will certainly appreciate having some of your oversight responsibilities directed, perhaps for the first time in a very long time, to the limited conservatorship system.

We are available to you and your staff as your time permits.

Respectfully,



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