



May 19, 2020

Committee on Civil Justice
Ohio State House of Representatives
77 S. High Street 11th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215
Committee Chairman-Rep. Stephen Hambley

Dear Chairman Hambley,

CEAR is a national leader in reforms that best protect vulnerable adults and their estates. We advocate for victims and victim advocates in the prevention of DPOA, probate, trust, and adult guardianship fraud. **I am writing in support of HB500, the Petition for Visitation with Adults being Isolated.**

It was reported by the state Administration of Courts in 2017 that Ohio had approximately 65,000 adults under guardianship. For those who don't know guardianship is when a court is petitioned and a judge orders a third party to have complete control over an individual and their estate. The act is often referred to as a civil death sentence and too often the conscripted individuals are afforded less rights than a convicted mass murderer.

In the case of fraudulent adult guardianships, which are used specifically by the predatory legal community to unjustly liquidate an estate for the benefit of unintended third parties, isolation is a constant. CEAR uses a phrase to describe over 3,000 cases we have investigated nationwide; isolate the victim, defame legitimate protectors, and liquidate the estate. Most often these individuals die alone, destitute, and on Medicaid, while the predatory parties enjoy the estate with little oversight.

When a vulnerable adult is isolated, especially by those they are fully subject to, their life expectancy is cut by 2/3 per many experts who have studied the effects of isolation. The emotional and psychological impact of losing contact with previous relations and with those you have learned to trust is immeasurable. Isolation is also a red flag to exploitation, especially financial exploitation. Isolation ensures no witnesses, hides criminal acts and silences the victim. Isolation can be executed by predatory caregivers, durable powers of attorney, guardians, lawyers, trustees, and family.



Ohio has a major problem with fraudulent adult guardianships. The 2014 arrest and conviction of Franklin County attorney and guardian Paul Kormanik, the current criminal prosecution of Cuyahoga attorney and guardian Dorothea Kingsbury, and the ongoing guardianship case of the Fourough Saghafi sponsored by Lorain County attorney Zachary Simonoff substantiates the point.

Isolation from previous relations is almost always a harbinger of something far more sinister. Having a law that obligates adult protective services(APS), law enforcement, and equity court jurists to ensure visitation with vulnerable adults strengthens Ohio's commitment to family values and the rights of the marginalized.

CEAR and its Ohio based advocates request your support of HB500.

Regards,

Richard W. Black
Executive Director-CEAR

.cc Representative Darrell Kisk, District 70
Representative Riordan McClain, District 87