



Testimony on HB 7
Erich Bittner, Director of Government Relations
Ohio Association of County Boards of DD
2/16/21

Chairman Hillyer, Vice Chair Grendell, Ranking Member Galonski, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee;

On behalf of the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities, I thank you for this opportunity to offer our full support for House Bill 7 and request that the bill be approved as expeditiously as possible.

HB 7 will provide a mechanism for nonprofit providers of guardianship services to serve as guardians. Under current law, it is the *employees* of those nonprofit entities who must serve in that role, which means that whenever one such employee terminates their employment, a new guardian must be appointed. This involves filing an application in the probate court, holding a hearing, and the involvement of a court investigator and appointed counsel. The entire process requires the expenditure of significant time and other resources from both the guardianship provider and the court, and the resulting delays in service are detrimental to the person whose guardianship is in question.

HB 7 takes a common sense approach to this bureaucratic inefficiency. By allowing nonprofit corporations to serve as the guardian, these entities will have the necessary flexibility to properly serve their wards without interruption for basic human resources issues like vacations and staff departures. This approach is already successfully used by county guardianship service boards and by Advocacy for Protective Services, Inc (APSI), and should be expanded. Failing to pass this bill will mean continued frustration and wasted court time and expense.

Thank you for your consideration of the issue. I will be happy to talk about the issue in additional detail at your convenience.