

Judge Charlotte Coleman Eufinger (Retired)

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Proponent Testimony on H.B 7 House Civil Justice Committee

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

I thank you for this opportunity to submit proponent testimony for House Bill 7. I am Judge Charlotte Eufinger, recently retired from the Union County Probate & Juvenile Court. I support the guardianship nonprofit agency proposal in this bill.

Some time ago I raised the need to establish **a small county alternative to the Guardianship Services Board, per R.C. 2111.52**. As a small county, Union County has created a guardianship program that provides experienced, capable guardians to serve as guardians of the person for members of our community who do not have a family member or friend able and willing to serve. Currently the Union County Guardianship Services program has less than 16 wards who are served by four part-time guardians. Most guardians in our county are family members of their ward. We have found that in our county, it is a prospective ward who has mental health and/or developmental disability issues for whom we have difficulty locating a guardian to be appointed. However, if that guardian goes on vacation or takes a different job, another “staff guardian” cannot take over unless he or she applies to be successor guardian which takes court time and the additional expenses for an application to be filed and a hearing to occur. The Court Investigator is also involved as well as appointed counsel.

I support this change to Ohio’s guardianship laws to permit appropriate non-profit corporations domiciled in Ohio and organized under the laws of this state to be appointed as such guardians of the person. This approach is presently embraced in the law but only for wards with developmental disabilities and non-profit corporations with a contractual relationship with the Department of Developmental Disabilities. I support amending R.C. 2111.10 to expand this model to all wards who qualify.

The Ohio Judicial Conference, the Ohio Guardianship Association, the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities, and APSI (Advocacy for Protective Services, Inc.) all support the concept of allowing nonprofit corporations to serve as guardians of the person in Ohio.

Thank you for your consideration and time in reviewing my testimony and the guardianship nonprofit provisions in H.B. 7. Although I am unable to attend the hearing in person, I would be happy to follow-up on any questions you may have.

Charlotte Coleman Eufinger
Judge, Retired