

SB 213 Proponent Testimony
Amy Freeman
Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee
Chair Nathan Manning
May 6, 2024

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is **Amy Freeman and I am the statewide transition programs coordinator for the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities. Additionally, I am on the steering committee of the Supported Decision-Making Network of Ohio (SDMNO).** I am submitting this testimony as a proponent of SB 213.

This bill is so important because it **presumes** the competence of any adult with a developmental disability. There is a lot of misinformation among expert evaluators and educators. I have experienced many situations where physicians may be approached by parents of patients with disabilities and asked to complete an expert evaluation form to be used as evidence in a guardianship proceeding. These parents may have been led to believe or even told outright that they must take guardianship of their child when they turn eighteen. Parents may think they will be unable to keep their child safe as well as have access to their educational, medical, and financial records. **This is, in fact, not true.** I recently conducted a training for parents of children with deaf/blindness and the educators who serve these children. Over 90% of those in attendance (including educators) have been told (educators admitted that they automatically tell families) that once their child reaches the age of majority, they need to pursue guardianship.

Sec. 5123.681. (A) Based on the principle that all adults with developmental disabilities should be afforded all of the rights set forth in section 5123.62 of the Revised Code, all adults with developmental disabilities are presumed to be capable of making decisions regarding their lives and activities of daily living and are presumed to be competent to handle their own affairs, unless otherwise determined by a court of competent jurisdiction.

Chair Manning and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony as a proponent on SB 213.

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