



## **Disability and Guardianship Project Disability and Abuse Project**

9420 Reseda Blvd. #240, Northridge, CA 91324  
(818) 230-5156 • [www.spectruminstitute.org](http://www.spectruminstitute.org)

---

February 18, 2017

Satoshi Yanai  
Supervising Deputy Attorney General  
California Department of Justice  
Los Angeles, California

Sent Via Email Message

Dear Attorney Yanai,

Thank you for responding to our letter to Attorney General Xavier Becerra about the ongoing and systematic civil rights violations being experienced by people with developmental disabilities who are involuntary litigants in limited conservatorship proceedings.

We are pleased that the Civil Rights Enforcement Section is giving a preliminary review to the concerns that we brought to the Attorney General's attention.

You asked if we had any specific violations that would illustrate our larger concerns. We do. I am attaching some documents that give a sample of some of the problems.

We cannot emphasize enough that the problems with limited conservatorship proceedings are systemic and therefore taint nearly all cases that are processed through it. The problems involve deficient practices of court-appointed attorneys, court investigators, regional centers, and virtually all components of the system. At the very core, however, are the deficiencies with the court-appointed attorneys. The state has not developed performance standards for them, there is inadequate training, and there is virtually no monitoring of the practices of these attorneys. Since there are never any appeals in these cases, the normal corrective function of the appellate process does not apply to the limited conservatorship system. Because of the nature of their disabilities, limited conservatees and proposed limited conservatees lack the ability to complain about the denial of access to justice in these cases. As a result, extraordinary intervention is necessary to fix this broken system.

After some of these documents have been reviewed by the Civil Rights Enforcement Section, I would be willing to sit down with staff attorneys to discuss the issues and answer their questions. I have spent nearly 4,000 hours over the past few years studying the limited conservatorship system, identifying problems, and developing solutions that are consistent with the requirements of federal due process, the state's Lanterman Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. I am eager to share my thoughts about these solutions with Department of Justice lawyers who are civil rights oriented.

I look forward to hearing back from you and to meeting with the attorneys in the Department of Justice in the near future.

Thomas F. Coleman  
Legal Director  
Spectrum Institute

cc: Attorney Angela Sierra

Attachments:

1. [Daily Journal: Legal services program appears to violate the ADA](#)
2. [Example of ADA violations in Stephen's case](#)
3. [Another example of ADA violations](#)
4. [Greg's case \(forced socialization\)](#)
5. [Efficiency vs. Justice \(audit of cases in Los Angeles\)](#)
6. [Daily Journal: Something that's actually rigged](#)
7. [Daily Journal: Legal system without appeals should raise eyebrows](#)
8. [Daily Journal: We need to fix complaint procedures for disabled litigants](#)
9. [Daily Journal: Delay and denial of voting rights in California](#)
10. [Mickey is Dead: a case study in disability, abuse, and the failure to protect](#)
11. [An essay about Mickey's case](#)