

California Coalition Joins Call for Limited Conservatorship Reforms

Momentum is Building for a Statewide Review

The call for reform of the Limited Conservatorship System in California just got louder with the release of a report that echoes concerns and criticisms raised earlier this year by the [Justice Denied](#) report of Disability and Abuse Project of Spectrum Institute.

The new report, titled [Thinking Ahead Matters](#) was released by the Coalition for Compassionate Concern of California, whose research was done with the assistance of disability rights and disability services organizations and agencies, such as The Arc of California, Disability Rights California, the state Department of Developmental Services, and the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Both reports show that more than 40,000 adults with developmental disabilities are under a limited conservatorship. The research underlying both reports discloses major deficiencies in the procedures utilized for creating these conservatorships and for reviewing them periodically as required by law.

The failures noted in the reports require a statewide review of policies governing the Limited Conservatorship System and the practices of judges, court-appointed attorneys, court investigators, petitioners, conservators, and Regional Centers.

The failure of the Legislature to designate an agency to monitor the practices of the participants in this system forms a major part of the problem. Inadequate training of judges, attorneys, and investigators is another major deficiency. Practices vary from county to county, thereby depriving people with developmental disabilities of equal protection of the law.

The Disability and Abuse Project sounded the alarm earlier this year through reports and conferences disclosing many deficiencies in the Limited Conservatorship System. In a [presentation](#) to the Judicial Council of California in San Francisco on November 14, the organization called for a statewide Task Force on Limited Conservatorships. When an Advisory Committee cited insufficient funding as an obstacle to creating such a task force, the organization wrote a [letter](#) to the Chief Justice reiterating the need for a statewide review and suggesting possible sources for funding.

Now that the report of the California Coalition has come to light – a report that reinforces and amplifies on the findings of the *Justice Denied* report – perhaps the Chief Justice will expedite the formation of a Task Force on Limited Conservatorships. The 40,000 adults who are currently under the control of this system, and the 5,000 more who are added to it each year, deserve as much.

To access the reports and for information: <http://disabilityandabuse.org/conservatorship-reform.htm>



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