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April 7, 2015

Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson
Capitol Office State Capitol, Room 2032
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Oversight Hearing on March 24, 2015

Dear Senator Jackson:

I wish that I had been able to attend the hearing you convened on March 24, 2015 to hear about problems faced by elders and dependent adults. I could not attend, as I was working, providing clinical psychotherapy to dependent adults and other victims of crime.

As Executive Director of the Disability and Abuse Project, I worked with my colleague, attorney Thomas F. Coleman, to produce several documents that detail multiple, ongoing and egregious violations of the rights of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the context of limited conservatorship proceedings. These were made available to the Judiciary Committee both prior to and during the hearings.

I wish that we had been invited to speak to the Committee. We have been working daily on the problems of limited conservatees and proposed limited conservatees for over a year.

From Tom's description of the hearing, as confirmed by a student intern who watched the video of it, I understand that virtually nothing was said about the role of the court in protecting people with developmental disabilities.

I am requesting that you hold another hearing, not focused on elders, but focused on people with developmental disabilities. Such a hearing could focus on two topics: (1) abuse, both in terms of better planning for risk reduction and better response when abuse does occur; and (2) the operations of the courts in processing limited conservatorship cases.

Prior to such a hearing, we would be happy to work with your staff to identify witnesses who can provide testimony about specific problems and about patterns that have been observed as well as make proposals on risk reduction, agency response to abuse, and limited conservatorship reform.

Thank you for your attention to this letter. I look forward to receiving your reply.

Sincerely,


Nora J. Baladerian, Ph.D.