July 10, 2014

Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senator
312 N. Spring Street
Suite 1748
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Request for support for a DOJ investigation into violations
of voting rights of people with developmental disabilities

Dear Senator Boxer:

Today we stood at the steps of the federal courthouse and announced that we are filing a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice seeking an investigation of voting rights violations of people with developmental disabilities.

There is overwhelming evidence that the Los Angeles Superior Court has routinely and systematically taken the voting rights away from adults who are placed in a limited conservatorship. The judges, and the attorneys they appoint to represent the proposed conservatees, are violating federal voting rights and disability rights laws. Even though federal law prohibits states from using literacy tests to determine eligibility for voting, the judges and the attorneys are using a test anyway. Plus, they claim that conservatees may not have someone help them complete a voter registration application – also a violation of federal law requiring ADA accommodations.

Thousands of limited conservatees have lost the right to vote in Los Angeles County and who knows how many thousands more have been disenfranchised in other parts of California.

We know that you strongly support the right to vote and that you oppose voter suppression efforts. That’s what this is. A suppression effort – sadly, one that has been successful – by people who are supposed to be dispensing justice and protecting civil rights, not violating them.

Please encourage Attorney General Eric Holder to use his authority to persuade the Los Angeles Superior Court to stop these illegal practices, and to reinstate the voting rights of those who were victimized by these federal voting rights violations in the past.

We look forward to you standing in solidarity with those of us who are advocating for the voting rights of these deserving American citizens.

Very truly yours,

Nora J. Baladerian, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Thomas F. Coleman
Legal Director