

TESTIMONY
SB 2028 – HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES
SENATOR CLARA SUE PRICE, CHAIRMAN
MARCH 7, 2005

Chairman Price, members of the House Human Services Committee, I am JoAnne Hoesel, Director of the Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse for the Department of Human Services. I am here today to provide information regarding the guardianship bill.

The Department of Human Services supports the concepts of this legislation but is unable to support the bill, as the funding is not within the executive budget.

I am here to acknowledge that there are situations where vulnerable adults are in need of guardianship services and have no options. These situations can occur when an adult is unable to make appropriate decisions in financial or health care situations whether due to the aging process or mental illness. When guardianship is not available it increases a person's vulnerability to losing their independence. The only formal guardianship program in place is available to individuals who have a developmental disability. The Aging Services Division is able, in a few situations, to pay for the initial court costs of guardianship but does not have funding for ongoing guardianship services. There is no program for those with a mental illness in need of this service.

The Department applauds the involvement of the broad-based group that has worked closely over many years to address this area of concern.

Thank you.