

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF RAISE BILL NO. 5840; AN ACT CONCERNING CONSERVATORS

By Richard Smith

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I am a probate court survivor. I was conserved ex parte and put in the locked ward of a nursing home. I was told I could never leave. I shared a room with two other men. One man was completely out of his mind. The other man was like me. Young, intelligent, over-medicated and very bored. The state was paying \$7,000 a month to keep me locked up in a nursing home. The only activity was smoking, watching tv and taking a supervised march around the perimeter of the building. The newspaper had articles cut out of it that the nursing home thought would be offensive.

Legal Aid helped me get out of the nursing home, out on my own and unconserved. I have been managing my own money for three years now. I have my own apartment. I can vote. I can enter into contracts. I can apply to the superior court for redress of grievances. I owe my freedom - literally and legally - to Legal Aid but this should never have happened to me. I was cast aside, locked up without having committed any crime.

This country is at war now to give other people the rights we enjoy as citizens. We all lose something when we tolerate a system that takes away the rights of people without due process of law.

I urge you to pass raised bill 5840 so this doesn't happen to other people.