



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ON SHB 2680**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS  
Senate Hearing Room 1, J.A. Cherberg Building, 8a.m.

Good morning Chairman Hargrove and members of the committee. My name is Mary Meinig and I am the Director of the Office of the Family and Children's Ombudsman ("OFCO"). Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony on Substitute House Bill 2680, which creates a separate chapter regarding guardianships for children in foster care. This legislation is a step toward Washington's implementation of the 2008 federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act.

While the Ombudsman does not support or oppose legislative proposals, we support the intent of SHB 2680, which is to increase permanency options for dependent children through guardianship, and to remove financial barriers to establishing guardianships. For some children and youth in foster care, return home or adoption are not appropriate or feasible permanency plans. Legal guardianship offers another option. OFCO routinely receives complaints from relatives and other caregivers who are seeking to provide a permanent home for a child, but who cite the lack of continued financial support as a barrier to pursuing legal guardianship. Section 9 of this bill would allow certain guardians to receive a subsidy which would remove this barrier to establishing permanency. SHB 2680 would also resolve uncertainty regarding the status of dependency guardianships.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide you with our thoughts on this proposal.