



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate stands up for basic rights for those with disabilities

SB 834 creates commission to protect dignity of vulnerable populations

SALEM – The Oregon Senate stood up for the basic rights and dignity of Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities today.

Senate Bill 834 – which passed by a 19-11 vote on the Senate floor – calls for creating an independent Human Rights Commission that would protect the dignity and basic rights of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

“Many of us take for granted the basic rights we exercise every day. For instance, whether or not to take a shower, how much ice cream to eat, or who we want to invite over to our home for dinner,” said Senator Sara Gelsler (D-Corvallis), who carried the bill. “Unfortunately, too many adults in Oregon with intellectual and developmental disabilities are denied the right to make these basic decisions for themselves. This commission will ensure that every Oregonian is able to exercise their full and free rights as adults without interference from others, no matter how well meaning.”

The commission proposal would be developed and created by the Oregon Department of Human Services. The proposal put forth must include necessary legislative changes, projected costs, the commission’s independence, comparison with other states’ commissions and a listing of the basic rights protected by the commission.

Federal law protects the rights of intellectually and developmentally disabled people, but sometimes those rights are unnecessarily restricted, and oversight is necessary. Several states have similar commissions or agencies dedicated to that purpose. Various states have human

rights-related authorities for protecting vulnerable populations. Oregon Currently has no such commission. Senate Bill 834 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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