

Good morning:

For the record, my name is Claudia Donnelly and I live in Renton.

In our country, we have the rule of law. That means no one –not judges, attorneys, government agencies, professional guardians or individuals are above the law. Yet, in our state --- and across the country, it appears there are professional guardians who don't believe they have to obey our laws.

In his letter to the Courts, Judge Lawler, Certified Professional Guardian Board Chairman, states that he feels that the Guardian Board should be exempt from GR 31A as the Board's rules "adequately provide for release of public information".

There are still important documents that Professional Guardian Board doesn't release to the public. I have attended a number of Guardian Board meetings since 2009. While the main part of the meeting is open to the public and informative, we – the public have little knowledge as to how grievances filed against guardians are handled. The Guardian Board discusses this type of information in its Executive Session, behind closed doors.

Grievances which result in discipline are well documented on the Guardian Board web site. But examining these cases, it appears, the Guardian Board seems to largely discipline guardians who don't pay their dues or file paperwork on time. What about those guardians who charge excessive fees and then deliver substandard care to their wards? The public is too often told that "the guardian did nothing wrong". The public does not know what the Guardian Board does because dismissed grievances in these cases aren't reported. We, those of us who file complaints against guardians – have no opportunity to cross exam and offer testimony to refute false claims presented by guardians. Thus, our complaints enter a "black hole" where nothing comes out. We are left wondering what happens to these complaints? We don't know. Once a decision has been made, we have no opportunity to appeal the decision. Why is it that some people don't file complaints against their family member's guardians? Could it be because the Board is stacked with guardians, judges and attorneys that may cause a conflict of interest?

In my case, my mother's guardian forced her into a care facility against her wishes when there was a less restrictive option available to her. I filed a complaint with the Guardian Board in 2006-07. I got a letter back from them saying the guardian did "nothing wrong". I was never given information on what criteria the Guardian Board used to dismiss this grievance. I was never given the right to see or refute the guardian's claims against me, whatever they might have been. The Board is not sufficiently public oriented in explaining how it handles major grievances. I asked the Board under the Public Disclosure Law to see what the Guardian provided to the Board as evidence that "he did nothing wrong". The Board told me I could get the information I submitted, but what the Guardian submitted, was privileged and I couldn't get a copy of it.

I believe the public should have a right to see what Guardians submit to the Board in defense of a grievance. We have a right to know what Guardians did, so that we don't choose a bad one as the guardian of our loved ones. We have the ability to check out plumbers via the Better Business Bureau to see their background. ~~You~~ <sup>We</sup> have the ability to check for complaints against doctors and other professionals with state agencies. That

option is not available with professional guardians. The Guardian Board keeps this information from the public. It would appear that other authorities also can't see these records either.

Please help the public see what the Guardian Board keeps hidden – and keep the Guardian Board from being able to avoid public scrutiny. I would like to see a database of all grievances filed against a professional guardian -- showing what happened to each grievance – was it dismissed, was it investigated further, or was it thrown out, for example, as frivolous.

Thank you.