



*Equity, Opportunity, and Inclusion for People with Disabilities since 1975*

May 22, 2017

Thomas Coleman, Legal Director  
Disability and Guardianship Project  
Spectrum Institute  
9420 Reseda Blvd. #240  
Northridge, CA 91324

Dear Mr. Coleman:

This letter is to express our support and to affirm our commendation for your leadership, as legal director of Spectrum Institute, in promoting human rights through reformation of the guardianship/conservatorship systems throughout the nation.

As an international leader in disability advocacy, TASH promotes human rights and inclusion for people with significant disabilities and support needs, and seeks to eliminate injustices that diminish human rights. Our organization often collaborates with individuals and organizations that share a similar vision of equity, opportunity, and inclusion for people with disabilities. TASH's Human Rights Community of Practice has reviewed the mission and activities of Spectrum Institute to promote the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and your work as its legal director in this regard.

Our findings show that Spectrum Institute has engaged in extensive research, education, and advocacy efforts to reform state guardianship/conservatorship systems to ensure they provide access to justice and due process to people with disabilities, and consider less restrictive alternatives to guardianship. Spectrum Institute has advocated for the right of every guardianship respondent to have a court-appointed attorney to ensure that he or she is provided access to justice in these proceedings as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and by the federal constitution.

This work supports our advocacy for the adoption of ADA-compliant performance standards and training programs for all participants in guardianship/conservatorship proceedings, including judges, court-appointed attorneys, court investigators, and guardians ad litem, as well as the adoption of effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance with such standards.

Given your leadership in this nationwide effort to protect people with disabilities, the Board of Directors of TASH commends you and Spectrum Institute and expresses support for the organization's activities in guardianship/conservatorship reform, including the mandatory appointment of competent counsel for respondents in these proceedings and the use of less restrictive alternatives such as supported decision-making whenever feasible.

In appreciation,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ralph W. Edwards".

Ralph Edwards, President  
TASH