

## **Senate Special Committee on Aging – Guardianship Hearing**

### **Testimony of Ryan H. King**

**March 30, 2023**

Good morning, everyone. My name is Ryan H. King. I live in Washington, D.C. I have disabilities, and I am independent. I was under Guardianship for 13 years, but not anymore.

I can do many things on my own. But sometimes I need help. I cook three days a week with support, wash my clothes and dishes, take out the trash, go to the movies, go to WWE wrestling matches, and travel. I work at Safeway. Come October it will be 23 years as a Courtesy Clerk. I love what I do. Metro access transportation service takes me to work.

In 2003, I graduated from high school and wanted to own a limousine business. To get started on my business I had to go to the government agency for help. My parents were told they had to get guardianship for me if I wanted to get their service. Why? I was already independent with support for the things that I wanted to do. I can make choices.

I didn't like being under guardianship because I had to let the court know everything I did, like going to events, doctor appointments, and church. No one else in my family did that.

In 2007, my parents went to court to end guardianship. The court gave me a lawyer. The lawyer said I needed to stay under guardianship. The judge agreed. I did not win my case.

I read about Jenny Hatch in the paper. Jenny Hatch was the first person to use Supported Decision Making to end her guardianship. Quality Trust for Individuals with Disability helped with ending her guardianship. I got them to help me tell the court about the things I can

do. They used Supportive Decision Making to show what I could do and all the people who help me. My family, my friends, and programs I am in are part of my team. I am in Project Action for advocacy, Lifeline Partnership for spiritual and activities, and Quality Trust for leadership and advocacy support.

We went back to court in 2016. The judge said he read about everything I can do. He was ending guardianship. I won. I know I can do some things by myself. I know I need help sometimes. Everybody needs help sometimes. I tell people not to judge me before you get to know me.

Thank you.