Submitted Written Testimony of Robert Terry

Rochester, New York

For the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution

"Toxic Conservatorships: The Need for Reform" Hearing

September 28, 2021

My name is Robert Terry, and I live in Rochester, New York. I have a supported decision making agreement, because I wanted to prove to the judge that I can make my own decisions and I didn't need a guardianship.

My mom used to be my guardian. She still supports me, but in a different way. She supports me the way I want to be supported, instead of the guardianship way – the way it used to be.

I hope the Senate can support people like myself that can, that want to have a supported decision making agreement to help them make decisions by themselves.

This written testimony is the transcript of submitted video testimony.

For more information about Robert ("Bobby"), please see https://sdmny.org/our-first-sdmny-restoration/ and the attached SDMNY flyer.

Super decision making news yES!

OUR FIRST SDMNY RESTORATION

When SDMNY began, and we did our first presentation at the NY Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation (then NYSACRA) Conference, we were approached by a provider from Rochester who told us she knew a young man for whom SDM would be perfect—and she was so right! Although at the time our only site was in NYC, she and a colleague came down to the city to be trained as facilitators, and began working with Bobby, with Joan Cornachio distantly mentoring.

Bobby is an amazing young man and a powerful self-advocate who had been reluctantly placed under guardianship at 20, because, as his family says, they didn't know there were alternatives. When they learned about SDM and SDMNY they embraced it enthusiastically, and Bobby signed his SDMA almost two years ago. His mom Tracy, who was his guardian, petitioned for the guardianship to be terminated, represented by our partner, Disability Rights New York (DRNY). Like just about everything else, the case was delayed by the pandemic, but this week the Surrogate in Monroe County issued his decision. He found that

> *the implemented Supported Decision-Making Agreement serves as a less restrictive alternative to the… guardianship dated April 11,2006 [and is] no longer necessary or in [Bobby's] best interest and should be terminated.*

The Court continued:

> *ORDERED, that [Bobby] is hereby granted full legal capacity and declared fully able to care for his personal needs…"*

We love Bobby, who has become such an important member of the SDMNY community, appearing (with Tracy, see the link below) in our video "WHY SDM?", joining our Advisory Council, and recently participating in SDMNY's training for mediators with the New York State Unified Court System Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution, and we are so proud of him. We're looking forward to a number of additional restorations soon, but how fitting that Bobby is our very first. So…

VERY BIG CONRATULATIONS TO BOBBY, HIS FAMILY AND SUPPORTERS, TO FACILITATOR MAUREEN PHILLIPS, AND THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS AT DRNY!