



## **Rhode Island Disability Law Center, Inc.**

33 Broad Street, Suite 601, Providence, RI 02903  
« The Designated Protection and Advocacy System for Rhode Island »

(401) 831-3150 Voice  
(401) 831-5335 TTY  
(401) 274-5568 Fax  
(800) 733-5332 Clients

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Monday, July 8, 2019

CONTACT: Morna A. Murray, Executive Director  
Rhode Island Disability Law Center  
401-831-3150 or mmurray@ridlc.org

### **Supported Decision Making Signed into Law in Rhode Island**

PROVIDENCE, Rhode Island, July 8, 2019-- In a victory for self determination of individuals with disabilities, the Rhode Island Disability Law Center (RIDLC) announced that H 5909, the "Supported Decision-Making Act," passed by the General Assembly, was signed into law today by Governor Gina Raimondo. Rhode Island joins a growing rank of states that have passed supported decision-making laws, including Alaska, District of Columbia, Delaware, Indiana, North Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin. The House bill was introduced by Representatives Robert E. Craven, Sr. (D-Dist. 32), Carol Hagan McEntee (D-Dist. 33), and Daniel P. McKiernan (D-Dist. 7). Senator Adam J. Satchell (D-Dist. 9) introduced a companion bill in the Senate, along with Senator James Seveney (D-Dist. 11), Senator Valerie Lawson (D-Dist. 14), Senator Donna Nesselbush (D-Dist. 15), and Senator Sandra Cano (D-Dist. 8).

"Supported decision-making is gaining momentum around the country, and today it cleared Rhode Island," said Morna A. Murray, Executive Director of RIDLC. "We have ever-increasing public education and awareness about positive alternatives to guardianship that work better, and preserve vital and necessary rights of people with disabilities to make decisions about their own lives."

The Supported Decision-Making Act creates sound alternatives to restrictive legal guardianship for adults with disabilities, providing them the option of assistance in making major life decisions that are right for them. These decisions may include, among other issues: where an adult with disabilities wishes to live; with whom they would like to live; where they want to work; and, what kinds of services, supports and medical care they wish to receive. As one of its articulated underlying principles, the Supported Decision-Making Act declares, "The values, beliefs, wishes, cultural norms, and traditions that adults hold, should be respected in supporting adults to manage their affairs."

RIDLC is grateful to Chairman Craven, Senator Satchell, and all House and Senate sponsors for their hard work on this landmark legislation for people with disabilities, and to Governor Raimondo for her support.

"Everyone has the right to make choices and the same goes for people with disabilities," said Murray. "We at RIDLC, along with our community partners, look forward to providing training and assistance to individuals with disabilities, their families, providers, educators, and other professionals in utilizing this critical tool for helping people with disabilities to live the lives they choose."

###

The Rhode Island Disability Law Center is the federally funded, independent, nonprofit legal organization designated as the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) System for Rhode Islanders with disabilities. As a P&A agency, our job is to promote the civil rights of individuals with disabilities by providing individual representation, advocating for systems change, and reviewing abuse and neglect investigations. Located in downtown Providence, we provide services to over 1,000 persons with disabilities each year. Established in 1977, we currently administer nine federally funded programs that authorize us to represent people with diverse types of physical, intellectual, and psychiatric impairments on a broad spectrum of disability-related issues. For more information, please visit our website at [www.ridlc.org](http://www.ridlc.org). For more information and research on supported decision-making, please see the National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making, <http://supporteddecisionmaking.org/>.