

February 23, 2015

To: Senate Human Services and Early Learning Committee

From: Rachel Simpson

RE: Support for SB 617

Chair Gelser and Members of the Committee:

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My name is Rachel Simpson. Today, I want to tell you how I got my own apartment. When I graduated from high school in Newport, Oregon, I wanted to live on my own. This was important to me because I wanted to expand my horizons and have my own life.

But, I could not find a place to live that was affordable or accessible. I ended up living in a group home in Dallas, Oregon for over two years. The group home did not fit my needs – it wasn't my style. I need be active more than group home life allowed me to be. I like to go out and be a normal 22 year old.

I recently moved out of the group home and into my own apartment. It took 2 ½ years for me to accomplish this dream. The biggest challenge was finding a place that was affordable and accessible with a lift system. I also needed a bottom floor apartment.

Now that I have my own place, my family can come over and hang out more often. I have more freedom and I am busier in my community.

My next dream is to live in a house of my own. I want to eventually move back to my home town and start a family.

SB 617 will help me and many other people accomplish their dream of living on their own by creating a housing plan for people with I/DD.