

TO: Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Kathryn Weit
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RE: SB 616

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In the 1999 Legislative Session, I had the opportunity to advocate for passage of SB 405 that created the Community Housing Trust. Because the Trust was funded by the sale of the land from Fairview Training Center, it is commonly known as the Fairview Trust. Fairview was the large institution that for almost a century segregated and isolated Oregon citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). It is no secret that during those years, many suffered abuse, rape and sterilization. In 2000, the last of the residents moved into the community and the land put up for sale.

The Fairview Trust was an effort to bring good out of bad public policy. The promise made to the I/DD community in statute was a simple one. The money from the sale of any property used as a "training center" would be put in the Community Housing Trust, the proceeds of which were to be used to assure that housing in the community would be available for people with I/DD in "perpetuity". It is difficult to convey the incredible emotion felt by individuals whose lives had been shaped by Fairview. For many, this was viewed as a tangible apology and a promise that people with disabilities would never again have to live in a place like Fairview.

The Trust, referred to in statute as the Community Housing Trust Account (ORS 427.335 and 427.340) was established to be separate and distinct from General Fund and to be held in the State Treasury. The Trust was designed to be in two sections. 95% of the funds from the sale were to be put in an interest bearing account and held in perpetuity. 5% of the initial proceeds combined with any interest from the corpus were to be made available for community housing. Administrative Rules were developed and a Trust Advisory group was established to oversee Trust operations. Grants ranged from a high of \$5,000 to a low of \$120.00. Over 1,000 households in Oregon received assistance from 2003 to late 2010 when the work of the Trust was halted and funds were loaned to address temporary budget problems unrelated to housing.

At approximately the same time the Fairview Trust was created, a housing trust was created in the mental health community from the sale of the Dammasch State Hospital. That Trust was never raided and is now an integral part of creating community housing for people who experience mental health issues.

The need for appropriate, affordable, and accessible housing has not gone away. In fact, as a result of family / self advocate demand and state and federal policy changes, there is even a greater need for community housing options for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. While the new K- Plan implementation may be used to fund some of the accessibility issues the Fairview Trust responded to in the past, a viable Fairview Trust could now be focused on the broader low, low income housing issues people with I/DD face.