

June 22,2020

Eugene, Oregon 97405

Members of the Joint Committee on the First Special Session of 2020

My name is Kathryn Weit and I am a retired Policy Analyst for the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities. I spent many years working on disability related issues in the Oregon Legislature and am writing today in support of LC 52. The history of discriminatory treatment of people experiencing disability goes back years and continues to this day.

Most of all, I am writing because I am the parent of a 40-year son who experiences significant disabilities. He is over 6' 2" and nonverbal. He becomes extremely agitated in unfamiliar settings such as medical environments.

In the most "normal" of times, access to health care for Colin is a challenge and when possible involves months of planning. We must have his trusted people with him at all times both for his safety and the security of others. When his "people" are with him, medical care can occur and Colin is calm. Maybe not happy, but calm. Without the support of these people, Colin would simply not have access to health care!

Several times we have been told by physicians that they did not work with "people like that" or that there was nothing they were willing to do for him because of his disability it wouldn't matter anyway. And while I write letters, complain to the Medical Board, and get apologies from the medical practice, so many do not have that time or knowledge. They accept the discrimination as the normal part of being a person who experiences disability.

Laws are important. LC 52 is an important step in fighting the discrimination that people with disabilities often experience in the medical arena.

Thank you.
Kathryn Weit

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Kathryn Weit

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