

# DRAFT

## SUMMARY

In memoriam: Kathryn Weit, 1947-2021.

### SENATE RESOLUTION

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22

Whereas Kathryn Weit was born in Portage, Wisconsin, on March 15, 1947; and

Whereas Kathryn Weit graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1969 and then graduated from Boston University with a master's degree in education in 1972; and

Whereas Kathryn Weit served as a VISTA volunteer in Arlington, Virginia, in 1972; and

Whereas Kathryn Weit moved to Oregon with her first husband, Ramsay Weit, in 1974; and

Whereas Kathryn Weit taught remedial reading at Jefferson High School in Portland, Oregon, from 1974 to 1979, demonstrating her deep commitment to presuming competence and empowering youth to reach beyond the stigma of low expectations to think, dream and plan for themselves; and

Whereas Kathryn Weit shared her love of Oregon and joy of exploration through the publication of her book, *Around Portland with Kids*, in 1984; and

Whereas Kathryn Weit lovingly welcomed her son, Colin Weit, in 1979 and her daughter, Jessica Weit, in 1982; and

Whereas Colin Weit was diagnosed with severe intellectual and developmental disabilities in 1981; and

Whereas Kathryn Weit attempted to navigate a broken system to access essential services for her son, encountering heartbreak, bureaucracy and

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 broken promises along the way; and

2 Whereas Kathryn Weit believed that what was unacceptable for her son  
3 was unacceptable for any child, so she changed careers to devote her life to  
4 demanding a seat at the table for all persons with disabilities and their  
5 families; and

6 Whereas Kathryn Weit was an original member of the parent advocacy  
7 group “Mothers from Hell,” which supported families to advocate for quality  
8 education services for their sons and daughters with disabilities through a  
9 strategy of matching righteous anger with levity while demanding basic  
10 rights for persons with disabilities and their families; and

11 Whereas Kathryn Weit was a force of nature who threw all of her energy  
12 into state and federal leadership, advocacy and policy development from 1989  
13 until shortly before her death; and

14 Whereas Kathryn Weit’s leadership fundamentally shaped services and  
15 opportunities for children, youth and adults with intellectual and develop-  
16 mental disabilities in Oregon; and

17 Whereas in the early 1990s, Kathryn Weit wrote and lobbied for success-  
18 ful passage of landmark legislation that established the statutory framework  
19 for Oregon’s Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education program;  
20 and

21 Whereas Kathryn Weit played a crucial role in the work to expose  
22 rampant abuse at and ultimately close the Fairview Training Center,  
23 Oregon’s largest institution for persons with intellectual and developmental  
24 disabilities; and

25 Whereas Kathryn Weit was the only nonlawyer representative of the ad-  
26 vocacy community authorized to negotiate directly with the state for the  
27 *Staley* settlement agreement, which funded and phased in personal and family  
28 support services for thousands of individuals who had languished for years  
29 on long waiting lists for services; and

30 Whereas Kathryn Weit recognized that integrated, affordable housing is  
31 essential to community inclusion and she therefore advocated for the cre-

1 ation and protection of the Fairview Trust from the sale of the Fairview  
2 Training Center and the Eastern Oregon Training Center; and

3 Whereas Kathryn Weit’s leadership and advocacy were also essential to  
4 Oregon’s passage of modified and extended high school diplomas, develop-  
5 ment of signage to warn women of the dangers of alcohol consumption dur-  
6 ing pregnancy, inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Oregon Health  
7 Plan, creation of the Family Support Council and the Oregon Family to  
8 Family Networks, removal of the “R” word from Oregon’s statutes, creation  
9 of quality transition services for students with disabilities through age 21,  
10 development of the Oregon Respite Program and adoption of Oregon  
11 Medicaid waivers to allow children with significant medical needs and be-  
12 havior supports to grow up in their own family homes rather than nursing  
13 homes or foster care; and

14 Whereas Kathryn Weit, knowing that people with disabilities and their  
15 families and friends needed to understand their history and their community  
16 in order to tell their stories and effect change, developed a strong Partners  
17 in Policymaking program to equip hundreds of Oregonians to engage in  
18 successful advocacy; and

19 Whereas Kathryn Weit was a friend and mentor to dozens of people with  
20 and without disabilities across the state and nation, including legislators,  
21 school board members, state agency directors, legislative staff, lobbyists and  
22 secretaries of federal agencies; and

23 Whereas Kathryn Weit maintained a sense of humor in the darkest of  
24 circumstances, and she lived by her motto “know your issue, do your re-  
25 search and come prepared,” and as a result, she enjoyed universal trust and  
26 admiration from advocates, providers, families, government officials and leg-  
27 islators; and

28 Whereas Kathryn Weit spent her life working to encourage people to tell  
29 their own stories, because she knew disability rights is a movement of many  
30 and that no matter how powerful a story is, it is just one of many; and

31 Whereas Kathryn Weit fought to help persons with disabilities and their

1 allies gain a seat at the table, but she never stopped reminding them that  
2 sitting at the table was just a first step and that using that seat requires  
3 skill and preparation; and

4 Whereas Kathryn Weit's heart was large enough to encompass families  
5 across the state and nation, and she never wavered in her love, commitment  
6 and pride in her family; and

7 Whereas Kathryn Weit married her best friend and partner in advocacy,  
8 George Braddock, on July 2, 2011, at the Ritz Sauna & Showers at the  
9 Oregon Country Fair after 23 years of partnership; and

10 Whereas Kathryn Weit and George Braddock celebrated their commitment  
11 with a ride in a flamingo-adorned wagon, cheered by friends, family and  
12 colleagues; and

13 Whereas Kathryn Weit's advocacy helped families across Oregon but also  
14 ensured that her son Colin has a life he enjoys in a home of his choosing  
15 with the opportunity to share riddles and jokes with those he trusts; and

16 Whereas Kathryn Weit openly spoke of her deep love for and admiration  
17 of her daughter Jessie, and she regaled friends and colleagues with stories  
18 of Jessie's adventures, resilience, professional accomplishments and loving  
19 support of her brother Colin; and

20 Whereas Kathryn Weit beamed with adoration upon the birth of her  
21 grandsons, William and James Martus, and she delighted in their curiosity,  
22 creativity and development; and

23 Whereas Kathryn Weit was always available to listen, laugh and share  
24 secrets with her friends, and she made time for a two-week rafting trip on  
25 the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon after her alleged retirement;  
26 and

27 Whereas Kathryn Weit ultimately failed at retirement by continuing her  
28 disability advocacy work, remaining deeply engaged in operating the Ritz  
29 Sauna & Showers at the Oregon Country Fair and devoting hours to Friends  
30 of the Library in Lane County; and

31 Whereas Kathryn Weit, in the final months of her life, continued her

1 advocacy by working to ensure that people with disabilities and their fami-  
2 lies could obtain COVID-19 vaccinations and could have access to disability  
3 support staff in hospitals and demanding that Oregon adopt strong legis-  
4 lation prohibiting discrimination in the delivery of health care; and

5       Whereas Kathryn Weit is recognized as a beloved matriarch and a force  
6 who shaped policy and opportunity, impacting persons with intellectual and  
7 developmental disabilities across their lifespan; and

8       Whereas Kathryn Weit left this world at sunset on April 25, 2021, with  
9 George and Jessie at her side; and

10       Whereas Kathryn Weit's friends and family have established the Kathryn  
11 Weit Foundation to support new generations of public policy development  
12 and advocacy to benefit the intellectual and developmental disability com-  
13 munity; now, therefore,

14 **Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Oregon:**

15       That we, the members of the Senate of the Eighty-first Legislative As-  
16 sembly, honor and celebrate the remarkable life and profound contributions  
17 of Kathryn Weit, and we express our sincere and abiding gratitude for her  
18 service to persons with disabilities and to all Oregonians; and be it further

19       Resolved, That a copy of this resolution shall be presented to the family  
20 of Kathryn Weit as an expression of our sympathy, condolences and grati-  
21 tude.

22

---