

February 1, 2022

TO: Senate Committee On Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery
FR: Bob Joondeph, Portland/Oceanside, bobjoondeph@gmail.com
RE: SR 201, In memoriam: Kathryn Weit, 1947-2021

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Robinson, Senators Kennemer, Lieber, and Sollman

My name is Bob Joondeph. In 2019, I retired from my position of Executive Director of Disability Rights Oregon after over 30 years of advocating for the rights and safety of adults and children with disabilities. For the entire course of those years, I, our office, and our community had the good fortune to work in collaboration with Katherine Weit.

Simply put, Katherine was a superb advocate who led and collaborated to achieve huge improvements for adults and children with disabilities and their families. SR 201 wonderfully captures her achievements and spirit. It acknowledges that she is sorely missed, not only by her friends and family but by our state.

As Chair Gelser Blouin and member of this committee are well-aware, public services and financing that support people with disabilities are complex and subject to a variety of changes and pressures. Their goal, however, is simple: to allow children, adults and their families to have the opportunity to pursue self-directed, meaningful lives. Katherine's commitment to that goal was rock-solid. Her personal experience and empathy formed the foundation of a savvy, grounded and collaborative approach to achieving needed change.

There are years of stories that I could relate but I'm sure you will hear many of them. Suffice it to say that I am grateful to have known Katherine and to have followed her lead (usually) to achieve meaningful change for so many. Especially for Colin, Jessica, George, family, and friends, this is a highly-deserved recognition of what Katherine has done for Oregon.

Thank you for this opportunity to add my support for SR 201.