

Enrolled

Senate Resolution 201

Printed pursuant to Senate Interim Rule 213.28 by order of the President of the Senate in conformance with pre-session filing rules, indicating neither advocacy nor opposition on the part of the President (at the request of Senate Interim Committee on Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery for Senator Sara Gelsler Blouin)

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 broken promises along the way; and

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

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

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

Whereas Kathryn Weit's leadership fundamentally shaped services and opportunities for children, youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Oregon; and

Whereas in the early 1990s, Kathryn Weit wrote and lobbied for successful passage of landmark legislation that established the statutory framework for Oregon's Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education program; and

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

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

Whereas Kathryn Weit recognized that integrated, affordable housing is essential to community inclusion and she therefore advocated for the creation and protection of the Fairview Trust from the sale of the Fairview Training Center and the Eastern Oregon Training Center; and

Whereas Kathryn Weit's leadership and advocacy were also essential to Oregon's passage of modified and extended high school diplomas, development of signage to warn women of the dangers of alcohol consumption during pregnancy, inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Oregon Health Plan, creation of the Family Support Council and the Oregon Family to Family Networks, removal of the "R" word from Oregon's statutes, creation of quality transition services for students with disabilities through age 21, development of the Oregon Respite Program and adoption of Oregon Medicaid waivers to allow children with significant medical needs and behavior supports to grow up in their own family homes rather than nursing homes or foster care; and

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

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

Whereas Kathryn Weit maintained a sense of humor in the darkest of circumstances, and she lived by her motto "know your issue, do your research and come prepared," and as a result, she enjoyed universal trust and admiration from advocates, providers, families, government officials and legislators; and

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

Whereas Kathryn Weit fought to help persons with disabilities and their allies gain a seat at the table, but she never stopped reminding them that sitting at the table was just a first step and that using that seat requires skill and preparation; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whereas Kathryn Weit, in the final months of her life, continued her advocacy by working to ensure that people with disabilities and their families could obtain COVID-19 vaccinations and could have access to disability support staff in hospitals and demanding that Oregon adopt strong legislation prohibiting discrimination in the delivery of health care; and

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

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

Whereas Kathryn Weit's friends and family have established the Kathryn Weit Foundation to support new generations of public policy development and advocacy to benefit the intellectual and developmental disability community; now, therefore,

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

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

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution shall be presented to the family of Kathryn Weit as an expression of our sympathy, condolences and gratitude.

Adopted by Senate February 10, 2022

Lori L. Brocker, Secretary of Senate

Peter Courtney, President of Senate