

February 1, 2022

Chair Gelser Blouin and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ross Ryan. I am a self-advocate from Mt. Angel. I support SR 201. My testimony is below.

- When did you first meet Kathryn Weit?
 - I met her when we were doing an advocacy event in Salem when I was working with the Victory Alliance (a self-advocacy group) to talk about why people with disabilities deserve equal rights
- How did you know Kathryn?
 - We worked together at the Capitol, at the DD Coalition meetings and other advocacy meetings
- What do you think of when you think of her?
 - I think of Kathryn as a leader who always stands for all people
 - I see her as a person who fights for justice
- What do you remember her fighting for specifically that changed people's lives?
 - When we closed Fairview, which was a place where people did a lot of bad things
 - Kathryn and a bunch of other advocates fought to close it down because it was wrong
 - Also bills like the ABLE Act that gave people the ability to save money and be in charge of our own lives
- What was Kathryn's vision for people with disabilities?
 - She wanted us to have a life of our own so we can make our own decisions
 - She was our biggest ally with the goal to make the world a better place for people with disabilities
- Why is it important that people with disability are the leaders when making decisions in their lives?
 - So we can have a choice in how we live and have a life like anyone else
 - And so that we can pass legislation that proves we deserve to be in charge of our own lives
- Since you first met Kathryn in the 90s with the Victory Alliance, what did you learn?
 - I learned to use my voice to stand up for myself
 - I needed to have someone to show me that my voice matters
- How is your life different today versus what it was 30 years ago?
 - It is better because it is based on my needs rather than what someone else thinks I need
- What is the lasting impact Kathryn will have on Oregonians with disabilities?
 - The new generation will have what they need and be better able to advocate for what they need
 - We will have housing that fits our needs and lives that are like anyone else out in our communities doing what we want to do with the people we care about

Thank you for your time and for honoring Kathryn Weit.

Ross Ryan