



P.O. Box 329 Hood River, OR 97031
oregonsupportservices.org

February 1, 2022

To: Sen. Gelser Blouin, Chair, Senate Committee on Human Services,
Mental Health and Recovery
From: Katie Rose, Executive Director, Oregon Support Services Association

RE: Senate Resolution 201, honoring the life and works of the incomparable Kathryn Weit

Chair Gelser Blouin and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Support Services Association is comprised of the 14 Support Service Brokerages across Oregon. We serve nearly 8,000 adults with developmental disabilities living in their own or family homes in every community throughout the state. We connect people to what matters to them and support them to make the important decisions and choices that make up a life. And we owe, in part, the vision for these vital services and the values that underlay them to Kathryn Weit.

Many of the current Brokerage leaders had the pleasure to work alongside Kathryn. A few were lucky enough to have known her from or before the inception of Brokerage Services, in the wake of the Staley Settlement in 2001. She orchestrated collaboration, outlined policy, prepped people to speak, plotted behind closed doors, and demanded something radically new from Oregon's leadership and every person working in DD services. Kathryn never failed to speak truth in absolutely every room she worked her way into.

In 2013, the Community First Choice K Plan swept over the DD services landscape. Brokerage services and the principles that Kathryn fought so hard to embed were enveloped by change, along with the rest of the system. It felt like the values that had been taken for granted mere months before were suddenly up for reconsideration. Awash in requests for in-pur and engagement in policy and rulemaking, the Brokerage Association desperately needed an executive level representative to show up for these opportunities and hold fast to our core values. Kathryn, then in retirement, stepped up to support this work once again. She served as

the Oregon Support Service Association's first ever Executive Director and reestablished our commitment to self-determination and centering the power with the person.

Kathryn retired from her role with the Brokerage association at the start of 2015. As she left, she bestowed her vision for the future and her shrewd advice for getting it done. Over the years that followed, Kathryn made herself available to listen and give advice on confounding policy issues. She would always make time to talk you through any barrier you ran up against. Kathryn could listen and turn a problem slightly on its side to help you see it from another angle. Or remind you of the "true north" in the situation as you muddled your way through.

Kathryn had belief in the ability of the coming generation to carry the work along the path she had navigated for us. Now, we hold that compass in our own hearts, continuing forward. Her visionary goals were larger and longer than her earthly life and live on to the enrichment of so many lives to come.