

**Christy Reese
Gresham, OR 97080**

February 1, 2021

Chair Senator Sara Gelser Blouin
Vice-Chair Senator Art Robinson
Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery

Re: Support for SR 201 (Kathryn Weit Memorial)

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Robinson, and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery--

When my son was born and we entered the world of disability, Kathryn was already a well-known change maker in Oregon, and I had no idea the impact she would have on our family. In 2007 after applying for the 2008 "Partners in Policymaking" [PIP] advocacy training, I began to work for FACT Oregon, then called the Family Action Coalition Team, co-founded by Kathryn and Sharon Lewis. This is when I got to know Kathryn and when my life changed.

Having the opportunity to watch Kathryn work, up close was invaluable and a privilege that I will always be thankful for. She spoke with grace, deep knowledge and a fierceness that was masterful and had a way of making you try to make her proud. I remember a day she and I walked the grounds of the Oregon State Hospital, where the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities [OCDD] had their office. We walked and talked, she shared, and I learned. I remember feeling like a "groupie" and just soaking the experience in.

As FACT Oregon continued to grow and Kathryn retired from OCDD, I didn't have many opportunities to see her over the next few years. I knew she kept apprised of what was happening and worked on projects here and there. That gave me comfort, knowing she was still there, like a beacon we could all look towards to stay on track.

Now my son will be able to access services without a long waitlist when he turns 18 years old in the near future. Our family is a living testimony to her work, and I thank you for the opportunity to provide this input on Kathryn's extraordinary work and life.

Sincerely,



Christy Reese