

**AVA E. BARTLEY**

P.O. Box 302  
Dundee, OR 97115

February 1, 2022

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)**

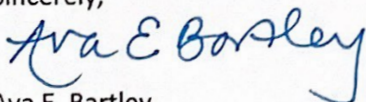
Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Robinson, and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery:

I first met Kathryn Weit in 2010 when I was selected for the "Partners in Policymaking" (PIP) parent leadership training class that was co-facilitated by Kathryn and Roberta Dunn. Once a month for the first half of that year, my classmates and I would head down to Salem for the weekend to unplug from the stresses and challenges of our everyday lives, and Kathryn and Roberta would pour knowledge into us about important topics like disability history, disability policy, advocacy, the importance of belonging, our education system, whole life planning, systems change and more. They taught us that disability is natural, our children who experience disability are not broken or incapable, and they urged us to have high hopes and expectations for the lives of our children. That training was a life-changing experience for me.

After graduating from PIP, I had the incredible good fortune to work for Kathryn as a part-time policy analyst at the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities. A lawyer by trade, I had always been eager to "see how the sausage was made," and I spent many happy days following Kathryn around the Capitol to meet with legislators during the 2011 legislative session. We got to know each other better in the many great conversations we had sitting outside legislators' offices, waiting for our meetings. I also watched and learned from her as she sat at a variety of policy tables, meeting with agency representatives, stakeholders, family members and self advocates on issues important to the disability community. Kathryn showed me the ropes and introduced me to many people, easing my way into policy and advocacy work. She might have been small in stature, but Kathryn was truly a force to be reckoned with in terms of her vast knowledge of the developmental disability and education service systems, her ability to present information succinctly and clearly, the relationships she had built over the years and the trust and respect people held for her, and her tenacity and patience for the tireless work it takes to make long-term systems change.

During the last decade, I was fortunate to call Kathryn a mentor and a friend, and our paths crossed many more times. I will be forever grateful for the many lessons she taught me and the example she set for all of us who knew her. Thank you for honoring Kathryn's extraordinary life and the impact of her work in this very meaningful way.

Sincerely,



Ava E. Bartley