

Submitter: Beth Kessler

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery

Measure: SR201

Chair Gelser Blouin and Members of the Senate Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery Committee,

My name is Beth Kessler. Kathryn Weit hired me to work for the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities in 2010. I am one of many to say she changed my life.

Until I met Kathryn, I was a public relations executive who wanted to do work I believed in - I wanted to do work that left the world just a bit better than it was. I had no idea how to do that. But Kathryn did.

Kathryn looked around and saw tools and opportunities where the rest of us saw barriers. She built a foundation of values and connections the rest of us could stand on - that we continue to stand on. And she demanded we do the same for those who would come next.

Kathryn taught me it was my responsibility to learn from the past, to use it as a tool and find what is helpful. She taught me that connection with people is how work gets done - how changes become possible. And she taught me that advocacy is not a one-sided endeavour. Our motivations matter, and those who advocate are asked to give voice to their motivations while helping others reflect on their own.

Kathryn spent her career sharing her stories - her motivations - and helped us give voice to our own.

I believe that is the legacy Kathryn would be proudest of - an entire generation of advocates will continue to make a difference because she believed we could, and we are determined to prove her right.

Thank you,  
Beth Kessler