

○ *Statement of Rebecca Keene in support of SB 700*

- As a survivor of a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) at the age, of fifteen years old, I am in high support of SB 700, because as an individual living with a Traumatic Brain Injury, life is not easy, anyways, however, living with a traumatic Brain Injury, life is just that much more difficult to survive, trying to navigate around the governmental system, and trying to find someone, or company, agency, etc. to hire or not discriminate during the hiring process is highly difficult to find an employer who will not discriminate in the hiring process, even though the person with a TBI has a college education and a Degree in Associate of Arts Paralegal Studies. Individuals like, myself are struggling to find employment based on skills that they have, which makes them highly competitive in the, market place. However, employers seem to overlook the skills an applicant has already and looks straight into the fact that the individual has had a TBI, and is possibly physically disabled, or Not, however, being a TBI Survivor, will have branded an individual for life, making it virtually impossible for the Survivor to achieve goals that the individual wants to achieve in their own lives. For example, my personal TBI was in 1990, and upon contacting Vocational Rehabilitation in or around 1992, or 1993, I told the case Manger that I had 3 goals that I wanted to accomplish in life, of which this case Manager, Who I will refer to as Dan, (A false Name) wrote down on my intake papers as being unachievable because I had a Traumatic Brain Injury, and am a hemiplegic.
- Goal Number One was: Write a Publish a Book of 200 Poems. I published that book in 2008. With the Title: Twilight Enchantments. Under the Pen Name of Sunshine Dawning.
- Goal Number Two: was to graduate from College: He said that this was an impossible goal Or Unachievable, because I had had a Traumatic Brain Injury.
- I graduated on the Dean's List from Bryant and Stratton College in 2013, with my AAS in Paralegal Studies. Nothing is unachievable if one sets their mind to something that may seem far fetched if one is following their dreams. Even though they have had a TBI. This case Manager should have been nurturing my dreams rather than pushing them aside.
- Goal Number Three: Purchase a Home. This goal I have yet to accomplish. However, Given my determination to succeed in life, and accomplish whatever goal that I have set in life, no matter how big my dream may be or how far-fetched that dream may be, I, myself will use my career-based knowledge, as a Paralegal, and when I am ready I will begin my career as a Paralegal, and then when financially stable, I will find a way to purchase my own home, to spend the rest of my life in, whether it is in my Home County, of Jackson, where I was born and raised, Or, my current County of Multnomah, where I reside currently, or wherever I end up living in the long run, I just personally want to be treated equally to Non-Traumatic Brain Injuries, who honestly personally do not understand Individuals whom have sustained Brain Injuries and therefore treat TBI Survivors like outcasts in society. We, are not outcasts at all, and have dreams, goals and needs Just like other People in the world.

Please pass Senate Bill 700, so that Survivors of Traumatic Brain Injuries, like myself, can achieve their dreams, thrive in life, and Accomplish goals or dreams that can only be imagined in their life. I know that I could not have accomplished my dreams without the support of my Friends and Family. The support that I received after my Traumatic Brain Injury was unimaginable and tremendous, and it is my prayer that this bill will pass, so that others can get the assistance that they so need and deserve.

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