



Office of State Representative Tom Andersen

May 9, 2025

Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair
Representative Rob Nosse, Co-Chair
Capital Construction Subcommittee
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 5531

Funding (\$824,780) for the Design & Construction on Former Grounds of an Interpretative Plaza on Former Ground of the Fairview Training Center

Dear Co-Chairs Girod & Nosse, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of funding to assist the City of Salem's design and construction of an Interpretative Plaza located on the former grounds of the Fairview Training Center in southeast Salem. This Interpretative Plaza will honor the tens of thousands of Oregonians who resided at the Fairview training Center since its opening in 1908.

For nearly 100 years, this State institution was "home" for a variety of our community members. These community members – our frail neighbors, our struggling seniors, our intellectually and developmentally disabled family members — were sent there to be excluded from mainstream society because they were thought of as "less" or "inferior" from the rest of us.

In 1923, the legislature established the Oregon Board of Eugenics, and Fairview's superintendent served as an ex-officio board member. This eugenics policy provided for the "sterilization of all feeble-minded, insane, epileptics, habitual criminals, moral degenerates, and sexual perverts who are a menace to society." It is estimated that approximately 300 residents were sterilized by 1929.

In the early 1980's, the Fairview Training Center was one of the biggest issues facing Oregonians with disabilities. The center housed thousands of people, including babies. It was the largest institution of its kind in the nation and data showed high levels of abuse and neglect.

In 1986, advocates from the Association for Retarded Citizens – Oregon (now The ARC of Oregon), the Oregon Advocacy Center (now DRO) and several families of Fairview residents sued the State for Fairview's poor conditions. This civil rights lawsuit alleged inadequate training, medical care and education for residents. Fairview Training Center closed on March 1, 2000 and its residents were reintegrated into the community.

The Fairview Park Development and Management Plan is the product of more than 10 years of work by the City of Salem. This Plan includes construction of an Interpretative Plaza to honor former residents of Fairview as well as the indigenous people who previously lived on the site. This Plan includes intergovernmental collaboration with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.

The Interpretative Plaza portion of the Plan has an estimated cost of \$824,780.

I believe the State of Oregon has a moral obligation to assist in this project to help educate the public and honor former Fairview residents and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Tom Andersen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Andersen, HD-19