

December 13, 2011

Paul Terdal  
700 NW Macleay Blvd  
Portland, OR 97210

Washington County Board of Commissioners  
155 N First Avenue, MS-21  
Hillsboro, OR 97124-3072

Re: Appointment to fill vacancy in Oregon Senate District 17

Dear Commissioners,

As the next State Senator, I will dramatically transform provision and funding of critical services for the number one mental health challenge that we face today – Autism. Autism is a medical and behavioral health condition that now affects 1 in 110 children nationwide – including more than 8,000 Oregon school children, with 600 new diagnoses every year. Left untreated, most individuals with autism become dependent on public services for life, straining budgets for government programs: it is estimated that Oregon is now spending \$100 million per year on special education for autism alone, in addition to community services for disabled adults and children.

Several years ago, my two young boys – now aged 4 and 6 – were diagnosed with Autism. They have struggled with a broad array of severe symptoms common to others on the autism spectrum, such as feeding, communication, and behavior disorders. My boys are very fortunate – we had the financial resources to provide them with the medically necessary care that their doctors and psychologists at Kaiser and OHSU prescribed. They have done remarkably well, and have a great future ahead of them: our youngest child's communication skills have gone from the 0.2 percentile all the way to the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile, under intensive therapy; his older brother is thriving in a general education classroom at Chapman.

Most Oregonians with Autism have no such access – our insurance policy (the best Kaiser offers) limited our coverage to a small fraction of the services that its' own physicians had declared medically necessary. As a result, even middle-class families with good health insurance are forced to rely upon charity care or government services – swamping our special education and community mental health programs, and irrevocably losing the chance to intervene in early childhood when there is the best opportunity for the kind of dramatic improvement my boys have experienced.

Over the last two years, I have mobilized and led a broad coalition of grassroots supporters, advocacy organizations, professional associations, provider groups, and even insurers to develop and pass legislation requiring Oregon's insurance companies to cover medically necessary, evidence-based treatments for autism – as they are already required to do in 29 other states. This would provide patients with access to the medical and mental health care that they need, and ease the crushing burden on public services provided by the counties and school districts. In 2011, I wrote SB555, which

won unanimous bi-partisan support in the Senate Health Care committee; Sen. Hass is introducing a similar bill on my behalf in 2012, with a bipartisan team of co-sponsors.

We are on the verge of a breakthrough that will dramatically improve access to Mental Health services for Oregonians with autism while providing care more efficiently and reducing the impact on government programs. With your support and appointment as State Senator, I will be even more effective.

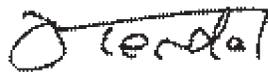
You can learn more about my work on this issue from OPB's Think Out Loud at <http://www.opb.org/thinkoutloud/shows/medical-treatment-autism/>.

I am also ready to put the passion and skills I have deployed on this critical issue to work to address our region's other challenges. Professionally, I have decades of experience with the kinds of high-tech and bio-tech companies that we are working to nurture and attract to build our local economy – and create jobs; my professional resume (attached) describes this experience in detail.

Finally, as a Washington County native who now lives in the city of Portland, I appreciate the history, character, and needs of both Washington and Multnomah Counties. As a State Senator with deep roots in both counties, I could help facilitate cross-county collaboration and ensure that the needs of all of our constituents are met.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you in advance of the hearing on December 21<sup>st</sup>. Please contact me at (503)984-2950 or by e-mail at [paul@terdal.com](mailto:paul@terdal.com) to arrange a time that is convenient for you.

Sincerely,



Paul Terdal  
Nominee for Senate District 17

PS: My family has lived in Senate District 17 since 2004. Due to redistricting, our current residence will be in SD 18 as of 2013. While that would not impact my immediate service during the remainder of the current legislative session, we are ready and willing to move as required to comply with residency requirements for ongoing service in future sessions.

Enclosures:

- Paul Terdal SD17 Overview: high-level summary of my experience and qualifications
- Paul Terdal Resume: detailed description of my professional background
- LC0086\_DRAFT\_2012\_Regular\_Session: LC draft of the Autism Health Insurance Reform legislation that I have written for 2012