

## SCR 8 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

### Senate Committee On Rules

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**Prepared By:** Leslie Porter, LPRO Analyst

**Meeting Dates:** 6/8

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#### **WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Honors and celebrates the remarkable life and historic accomplishments of Norma Jean Paulus and expresses gratitude for her contributions to the people of this state.

#### **ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

#### **EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

No amendment.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Norma Jean Paulus will forever be remembered as a pioneering and visionary leader whose career of dedicated public service touched the lives of so many and left an indelible imprint on the state of Oregon. Norma Paulus faced the obstacles in her life with unstinting determination, courage, and dignity until she passed away on February 28, 2019.

Norma Paulus was born Norma Jean Petersen on March 13, 1933, in Belgrade, Nebraska and she was raised in Burns, Oregon during the tribulations of the Great Depression. In 1950, Paulus graduated from Burns Union High School, where she was an exceptional student, a gymnast, and editor of the school newspaper and yearbook. At the age of 19, Paulus was stricken with Polio and she spent weeks in the hospital with an iron lung. After winning her battle with polio, she moved to Salem, Oregon, where she worked as a legal secretary at the Oregon Supreme Court. She earned such high marks on entrance exams that she was admitted to law school at Willamette University despite not having an undergraduate degree, and she was the only woman in her law school class. In 1958, she married fellow law student William Paulus, and they raised two children, Elizabeth and Fritz.

Paulus graduated law school with honors in 1962 and passed the bar exam the same year. She worked in private practice as an attorney and in 1969 she was appointed to the Marion-Polk Boundary Commission by Governor Tom McCall. A year later she was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives where she represented the people of Marion County for three terms. During her term as a legislator, Paulus was widely respected for her effective bipartisan work in passing major legislation involving the environment, land use, education, and open government. Paulus was elected Secretary of State in 1976, becoming the first woman elected to statewide office in Oregon. During her historic two terms as Secretary of State, Paulus battled election fraud, overhauled public records procedures, protected Oregonians with tough audits, and oversaw Oregon's first vote-by-mail election.

Paulus brought intelligence, integrity, hard work, and common sense to every position she held. Her decades of public service were a defining era in Oregon history, and she helped lead this state through a period of tremendous social change, growth, and economic revitalization. Paulus made history and she always made a positive difference, embodying with her exceptional life story the motto of the State of Oregon: "she flies with her own wings."

Senate Concurrent Resolution 8 honors and celebrates the remarkable life and historic accomplishments of Norma Jean Paulus and expresses gratitude for her contributions to the people of this state.