

April 15, 2021

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Rules
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SCR 10 – In memoriam: Senator Jackie Winters

Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Girod, and members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

On behalf of Oregon’s community hospitals and the patients they serve, the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS) joins the citizens of Marion and Polk Counties, the State Legislature, and all of Oregon in honoring the life and memory of Senator Jackie Winters. OAHHS appreciates this opportunity to express our full support for Senate Concurrent Resolution 10.

As we work through the first full session since Senator Jackie Winters’ passing, we continue to mourn her loss and appreciate more than ever her ability to forge consensus during times of conflict, to defuse animosity and replace it with affinity.

Senator Winters was a true trailblazer, collecting many “firsts” along the way. She was a highly respected legislator who was the first African American Republican to be elected to the Legislature and rose to become the first African American to lead a legislative caucus, regardless of party.

Senator Winters believed in reaching across the aisle to improve the lives of her fellow Oregonians. She was a deft politician, let there be no doubt, but one never had the impression that she was practicing politics. Indeed, no matter the issue, one was left with an enduring feeling of friendship grounded in a shared appreciation for public service.

Of course, her legacy will be defined by her tireless work for criminal justice reform, especially for juveniles. We would be remiss if we did not also record that Senator Winters was a champion of expanded access to high quality health care for all Oregonians. The Oregon Health Plan today stands as a model of access thanks in part to the work of Senator Winters. We can hear the echoes of her influence in the discussions we are having this session about culturally competent care and social determinants of health.

In a time of polarization, we can look to Senator Winters’ people-centered, community-focused approach to service. We miss her character and leadership. We also miss her friendship.

Sincerely,



Andi Easton
Vice President of Government Affairs

Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems