

HCR 27 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Rules

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Meeting Dates: 3/28

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Recognizes and honors volunteer firefighter Robert A. Hales (1967-2008) for his service to this state.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Robert A. Hales was a native Oregonian, born on September 4, 1967. He graduated from St. Helens High School and joined the United States Army in 1985, serving his country with honor and distinction.

Robert Hales began his training as a large equipment mechanic while in the Army and completed his diesel certification at Portland Community College. He worked as a mechanic for Hertz Equipment Rental for 12 years.

Robert and Mary Hales were married in 1991, and together they raised three daughters: Heather, Katie, and Sandra. Robert and Mary Hales moved to Scappoose, Oregon, to be near Robert's extended family, and in 1999 they bought a house across the creek from the fire station.

Robert Hales' interest in becoming a firefighter stemmed from the premature birth and illness of his daughter Katie, which prompted him to learn all he could about her care, and he ultimately became certified as an emergency medical technician (EMT).

Robert Hales began his volunteer career with the Scappoose Rural Fire Protection District in 2000. He loved the family atmosphere of the fire station, and he would often stop at the station just to visit and chat with other fire personnel.

Robert Hales used his skills and training to help maintain fire equipment and vehicles, and he was widely respected for his ability to diagnose and repair mechanical problems.

Robert Hales loved his community and he was a dedicated volunteer in many different ways, including doing agricultural work at a farm museum in Columbia County that his grandfather had helped to found, doing maintenance at the county fairgrounds, and serving as a campground superintendent with his wife.

Being a volunteer firefighter was a natural extension of Robert Hales' commitment to his community, and he signed on for this dangerous work to help the people he cared about while giving back to the place he called home. In 2001, Robert Hales was honored with a local volunteer firefighter of the year award, and in 2002 he was nominated for the statewide award as the top volunteer firefighter in Oregon.

Robert Hales was an exemplary volunteer firefighter and EMT, and he could always be counted on to respond to a fire or rescue call coming over the radio. On August 17, 2008, Robert Hales responded to a call early in the morning and spent 12 hours fighting multiple wildfires caused by lightning strikes.

Shortly after returning home, Robert Hales offered to drive his daughter to her job, but less than a mile from their house he suffered a cardiac event that caused him to lose consciousness and crash his vehicle. Although his daughter mercifully escaped from the accident unhurt, Robert Hales died at the scene, surrounded by his

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Scappoose firefighting family. Because he died shortly after fighting wildfires, Robert Hales' death was officially considered to be in the line of duty, and he is honored on the Oregon Fallen Firefighters Memorial.

Robert Hales was survived by his wife of 17 years and their three daughters, and his loss was deeply felt by his fellow firefighters and his many friends. He was honored with a funeral procession that included firefighters and their vehicles from all over Oregon. Since his death, Robert Hales' family have been heavily involved with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, volunteering to help other families in need.

Robert Hales was a dedicated volunteer firefighter and EMT who served the people of his community and the State of Oregon with honor and distinction.

House Concurrent Resolution 27 recognizes and honors volunteer firefighter Robert A. Hales for his service to this state.