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March 8, 2023

From: Yuri Boyechko, President, Ukrainian Foundation  
To: House Committee on Rules  
Re: Support SB583 – Holodomor Remembrance Day

Dear Chair Fahey; Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropf; Representatives Nosse, Scharf, Valderrama, and Wallan,

On behalf of the Ukrainian Foundation, I urge you to support Senate Bill 583 that would designate fourth Saturday in November Holodomor Remembrance Day in the State of Oregon.

The Ukrainian Foundation is an Oregon-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created and run by Ukrainian Americans. Some of our members and volunteers are second and third generation Ukrainian Americans; others are recent immigrants and refugees from the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine who had found shelter in Oregon.

Many of our members are descendants of Holodomor survivors. Those of us who grew up in the Soviet Union during the Soviet occupation of Ukraine lived for many years with the knowledge that a great tragedy had befallen our ancestors, but were unable to openly talk to them about their experiences for fear of reprisal from the Soviet government. Only after the fall of the Soviet Union were Ukrainians in Ukraine able to engage in society-wide conversation about the famine-genocide and to search newly opened Soviet archives in Ukraine for family members who were starved to death during Holodomor.

We are grateful to diaspora Ukrainians living in free societies in the US and Canada who worked tirelessly to interview Holodomor survivors who managed to escape the Soviet Empire and advocated for and supported the work of the US Commission on the Ukraine Famine of 1984-1988. We are grateful to people of different nationalities and backgrounds who studied, spoke, and wrote about Holodomor. We want to honor the bravery of the Welsh journalist Gareth Jones who traveled to the famine-stricken areas and reported the truth about the famine, even though he had been slandered by Soviet propaganda and prominent Western reporters who had built their careers promoting Soviet narratives. We honor Polish Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin who first developed the concept and coined the word “genocide” and who spoke and wrote about the genocide of Ukrainians by the Soviet regime. We honor Dr. James Mace, the Executive Director of the US Commission on the Ukraine Famine, a descendant of the Cherokees who designed and directed the Ukrainian Famine Oral History Project at Harvard University Ukrainian Research Institute.

Although Oregon is located ten time zones away from Ukraine, we feel the pain of the genocide taking place in Ukraine right now. The Russian state has proclaimed that the goal of the 2022 Russian invasion is the complete extermination of Ukraine as a nation and as a people. There is undeniable

evidence of war crimes being committed in Russian occupied areas that include murder of Ukrainian civilians and erasure of historic memory--the destruction of books in the Ukrainian, especially the books on Holodomor, the removal of Holodomor memorials, the damage and destruction of Holocaust memorials and other monuments.

We are grateful to the people of Oregon for once again offering shelter to refugees from Ukraine and for helping the world preserve memory of Ukrainian farmers starved to death by the genocidal Soviet regime and even in death maligned by unscrupulous supporters of authoritarianism.

Sincerely,



Yuriy Boyechko | President