

HCR 35 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Rules

Prepared By: Melissa Leoni, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 4/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure remembers, honors, and celebrates the life of Philip Lang and recognizes his contributions to Oregon and its people.

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

REVENUE: No revenue impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon lost one of its most committed public servants with the passing of Philip David Lang on December 29, 2024. Phil was a lifelong Oregonian, born in Portland on December 16, 1929, the youngest of five children born to Vera Margaret (Kern) Lang and Henry Winfield Lang. His roots in Oregon predate statehood, going back to 1848 when his family first arrived in Oregon by wagon train.

Phil proudly went through school in Portland, beginning with Woodstock Elementary School, then continuing to Franklin High School (where in May of 2024 he was honored with Franklin High School Alumni Association's highest honor, the Order of the Kite), and ultimately the Northwestern School of Law of Lewis and Clark College.

The vast majority of Phil's 95 years were dedicated to public service at the local, state, and national levels through professional, elected, military, and volunteer positions. He enlisted with the United States Army Air Corps at the age of 17, after earning the reluctant support of his parents. He valiantly served his country with the Army Air Corps, including 25 months in Japan with Air Force intelligence.

While in his twenties, Phil served as an Oregon State Police Trooper, as Chief of Staff to Portland Mayor Terry Schrunk, and ran as a candidate for Multnomah County Sheriff, albeit unsuccessfully.

In 1960, Phil's commitment to public service led him to run for the Oregon House of Representatives, where he served from 1961 to 1979. Phil's colleagues in the House of Representatives selected him to serve as Speaker of the House from 1975 to 1979. During his time as Speaker of the House, Phil focused on leading the chamber with respect, collegiality, and a commitment to the principles upon which the legislative process was established. He worked across the aisle on consequential issues such as the Equal Rights Amendment, bridging the urban-rural divide, sustainable budgeting, and other laws and policies that have made lasting impacts on the lives of Oregonians.

Phil's work in the legislature was never about ambition or personal recognition, but rather about camaraderie, deepening his and his colleagues' understanding of the issues faced by Oregonians across the state, and an unyielding devotion to the future he and his peers were creating for the generations to come.

Phil's commitment to the Oregon House of Representatives and the institution of the Legislative Assembly led to this body naming the House wing of the Oregon State Capitol, constructed under his tenure as Speaker, the "Phil Lang Memorial House Wing" in 1997.

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.

Outside of the Legislative Assembly, Phil had a successful 35-year career in insurance, managing business lines across multiple states and ushering his company into the era of computers and digital production. He volunteered as chair of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission from 1998 to 2011, earning a reputation nationally as a thoughtful and pragmatic regulator. That reputation led Phil to serve on the board of the National Alcohol Beverage Control Association for several years, including one term as its chair.

Phil served as a member of the board of directors of the Oregon State Capitol Foundation, remaining committed through his final days to the foundation's mission to preserve the Capitol, share its history, and engage Oregonians in our state's democracy. That tireless service led to Phil, along with his wife of nearly 45 years, Ginny Lang, being honored with the Bell Award for outstanding service to the foundation and the Capitol as a whole.

Phil is survived by his beloved Ginny, by his son, Philip David, and by a host of nieces, nephews, grandnieces, and grandnephews. Phil's friends, family, and colleagues remember him as a true son of Oregon, a committed public servant, a steadfast advocate, and a loving and compassionate person.