

Enrolled

House Concurrent Resolution 13

Sponsored by Representative HARTMAN; Representatives BOWMAN, MANNIX, Senators MEEK, WAGNER

Whereas Theodore Ralph Groener was born on December 25, 1941, in Oregon City, Oregon, to George Groner and Mary (McKee) Groner; and

Whereas later in life, along with several other family members, Ralph changed his name from Groner to Groener to more accurately reflect the family's German ancestry; and

Whereas after graduating from West Linn High School in 1960, Ralph Groener served his country with honor and distinction for four years in the United States Air Force (USAF); and

Whereas Ralph Groener was awarded the Airman's Medal—the USAF's highest noncombat award for heroism—after he risked his life to rescue three people from drowning after a boating accident; and

Whereas Ralph Groener attended Portland Community College and earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Oregon in 1969, remaining an avid Ducks fan for the rest of his life; and

Whereas while in college, Ralph Groener worked part-time at a local grocery store, and he became a member of the retail clerks union; and

Whereas after graduating from college, Ralph Groener worked as a community organizer during the national War on Poverty, taking his first steps on a lifelong journey spent fighting for the underprivileged and for working families; and

Whereas Ralph Groener followed in the footsteps of his uncle, Oregon state Senator Richard Groener, and embarked on a lifelong career involving politics; and

Whereas Ralph Groener was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives in 1972, where he served two very productive terms; and

Whereas in 1973, Ralph Groener was an original cosponsor of the first gay rights legislation to be introduced in the nation; and

Whereas Ralph Groener was instrumental in the passage of Senate Bill 100 (1973), Oregon's landmark land conservation legislation, serving as the bill's carrier on the House floor; and

Whereas following his legislative service, Ralph Groener was elected Clackamas County commissioner, and he served two four-year terms on the commission; and

Whereas in 1978, Ralph Groener was defeated in his electoral bid to become Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries; and

Whereas Ralph Groener served on the board of Clackamas Community College from 1971 to 1983; and

Whereas in 1990, Ralph Groener began a 30-year career as a political coordinator and lobbyist for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); and

Whereas Ralph Groener and his long-time colleague Mary Botkin were twice voted as the most effective lobby team by the Capitol Club of Oregon; and

Whereas for three decades, Ralph Groener was a beloved figure at the State Capitol and within AFSCME, known for his warmth and talkativeness; and

Whereas Ralph Groener was widely respected for his sharp political mind and strategic acumen, but he was also legendary for his huge laugh and incredible sense of humor; and

Whereas Ralph Groener retired from AFSCME in 2018, but he continued his passionate advocacy for the causes he believed in; and

Whereas three times in his life Ralph Groener acted with great courage and decisiveness at crime scenes to foil perpetrators and save victims, each time earning the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association Award for Valor; and

Whereas Ralph Groener's remarkable career was marked by dozens of other awards and honors; and

Whereas Ralph Groener passed away on June 1, 2022; and

Whereas Ralph Groener was survived by his beloved wife of 55 years, Sharon; his daughter, Hilary; his son, Chris; his granddaughter, Cassidy Hedger; his great-grandsons, Colton Lee Hedger and Cayden Theodore Hedger; and many other family members, friends and colleagues who miss him dearly; and

Whereas Ralph Groener will be forever remembered for his lifetime of dedicated public service and for the profound and lasting impact he had on the people of the State of Oregon; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:

That we, the members of the Eighty-third Legislative Assembly, celebrate the life and accomplishments of Theodore Ralph Groener, and we recognize and honor his contributions to the people of this state; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution shall be presented to the family of Ralph Groener as an expression of our sympathy and condolences.

Adopted by House March 27, 2025

Timothy G. Sekerak, Chief Clerk of House

Julie Fahey, Speaker of House

Adopted by Senate May 12, 2025

Rob Wagner, President of Senate