

Good morning Chair Frederick and Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the Committee.

For the record, Sunday, January 26, 1700 was the 325th anniversary of the last Great M9.0 earthquake to strike Oregon.

How many people here remember the March 1993 Spring Break Quake? It was a Magnitude 5.6 earthquake and although that classified as a Moderate quake, it damaged numerous vulnerable buildings, most prominently Molalla High School and the State Capitol. The kids in that photo were lucky school was out or this may have been a true disaster.

That was the Willamette Valley's last significant earthquake, back when Peter Courtney served in the Oregon House. The upside is that unlike Alaska and California, we don't have big damaging earthquakes on a regular basis. But, the downside is that we don't have enough moderate earthquakes that cause us to have to react and take action to either replace or rehabilitate unsafe buildings. Without earthquakes, advocacy is the primary way that we get seismic mitigation done in Oregon. Learning from other places, for sure, but enacting the laws, the rules, and the financing that require the big investments for seismic safety, that takes a lot of political will, and public will, to make that come together and happen.

Think about this - children don't have a choice when they go into an old school on a day to day basis. They have to be inside of that school and in class. Senator Peter Courtney understood what this meant. He understood the responsibility that falls on decision makers when the call to action is on their watch as elected officials, as school administrators, board members, but also for families and therefore the voters.

Senator Courtney was the tip of Oregon's spear when it came to earthquake legislation, but also he was a member of OSSPAC, the Commission's representative from the Senate, and he took his role very seriously when we were promoting seismic risk assessments for schools and the G. O. bonding that was necessary to get the money to do the retrofitting. Senator Courtney was the face and the voice and flexed the muscle to bring this forward in the Legislature and to get it passed and enacted.

Why placards? Earthquake mitigation needs to have it's story told, because when mitigation works, nothing happens and the benefits from all of the financial investments and the down time of construction are not necessarily appreciated. That is why recognition, like placards, is so important. People need to be reminded, maybe generations later, that it took champions and leaders, like Senator Courtney, to make this work happen. You may not see the seismic retrofit work behind the walls and in the ceilings and foundations, but those retrofits save lives.

So being here today to recognize Senator Courtney, I also want to say, that for those of you who understand the importance of his work, let him be a model for all of you in the in the way he worked, the way he maneuvered, the way he leaned into the criticality of this work because it's a long-term investment.

In closing - the longer time that goes by without this earthquake happening on our watch, the more likely it's going to happen in the future for our children or even more likely for our grandchildren. Therefore, the work that we are doing today, on their behalf, is as critical and important as it ever was. That work is worthy of our recognition.