

Submitter: Chris Groener
On Behalf Of:
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Measure, Appointment or Topic: HCR13

Chris Groener testimony on HCR 13

Chair Bowman, Vice-chair Pham, Vice-chair Drazan and members of the committee I want to thank you for the opportunity of allowing me to testify today. And for those who knew my father, and despite my last name, I will try to be brief. For the record my name is Chris Groener, and I live in Oregon City.

I want to start by thanking each of you for serving our great state of Oregon and the communities you represent. My father, Ralph Groener, was proud to have done the same a generation ago. And if you knew him, you know he was not shy about pointing that out. As his son, I am proud to carry his name, and equally proud to be able to testify to you today that he was my hero.

But beyond being my hero, by virtue of being my father, you can see by the deeds and accomplishments identified in this resolution, he truly was a heroic individual. In addition to these accomplishments, my father had a unique ability to “communicate “
- Yes dad could talk!

But he also had an innate ability to find a connection to whoever he may have been speaking to. I can't tell you how many of my friends, and even strangers, have told me that conversations with my father made them feel “like a million bucks” or that they could accomplish anything they were going after. Of course, that was only after they described the length of their conversation with him. lol

As you can imagine growing up in a political family, I have knocked on more than a few doors in my day. I would take one side of the street and dad would start on the other, continuing to a specific spot where we would cross to the other side until we met back up.

I should mention that dad didn't believe in walk lists. We went to every door. He was not concerned about party affiliation or even if they were registered to vote. He said it was important to get to know everyone in the neighborhood. I remember getting so frustrated with him because I would inevitably finish my side of the street and cross back to his side - only to find he had only gone to 3-4 doors! We had lots of doors to get to!

Like I said, dad could talk!

On one occasion we saw dad's opponent canvassing the same neighborhood. When

I pointed it out to him, he promptly crossed the street and shook their hand. When I asked why he had done that he said, "son not only is that the Christian thing to do, but it drives them crazy!" I found out later that was a practice he had learned from my Great Uncle, former State Senator Richard Groener.

Further, my father taught me how to disagree without being disagreeable. He would tell me that even though you might be on opposing sides of a given issue, you likely will find one that you agree on and need their support in that debate. Dad was never afraid to cross the aisle to find common ground. He taught me that being a statesman and advocate for our community, especially the elderly, disabled and the impoverished, was what was important.

As I look around the political climate today, many of us have forgotten that simple lesson. I can say that I truly hope we can return to the politics of my father's generation.

One where there was civil debate, with the good of the State AND our fellow man, being the common intention.

Back to a time that Statesmanship rose above partisanship.

In conclusion, I will testify today that is who Ralph Groener was...

A STATESMAN ABOVE ALL ELSE!

Thank you.