



INDEPENDENCE

Oregon's Story Begins Here

Oregon State Legislature
Attn: Senate Committee on Rules
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 18

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Bonham, and Members of the Committee

It is with great admiration and deep appreciation that I submit this testimony in support of SCR 18, honoring Mayor John McArdle for his exceptional leadership and unwavering dedication to the City of Independence and the broader Oregon community.

Mayor McArdle embodies the essence of servant leadership, inspiring those around him through his tireless efforts to transform vision into reality. Under his steadfast leadership, Independence has flourished, becoming a model community that balances economic vitality, infrastructure investment, and a commitment to preserving its rich history. Visitors to Independence marvel at the city's revitalized downtown, active waterfront park, and impressive housing and hotel developments. While some may call it an "overnight success," those familiar with the city's journey understand that its transformation is the result of decades of strategic planning, public-private partnerships, and the unwavering dedication of Mayor McArdle—its most fervent champion.

Beyond his role as mayor, John McArdle has played a vital role in numerous local, regional, and state organizations. His contributions include serving as:

- President and board member of the Oregon Mayors Association
- President and board member of the League of Oregon Cities
- Chair and board member of the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments
- Chair and board member of the Ash Creek Water Control Board
- Co-originator and member of the Mid-Willamette Valley Mayor's Forum
- President and board member of the Monmouth-Independence Chamber of Commerce
- Board member of the United States Olympic Committee
- Founding President of the USA Track and Field Foundation
- Founding member and past chair of the Monmouth/Independence YMCA
- Organizer of the annual Hop & Heritage Festival in downtown Independence
- Director of the YMCA youth track club and co-originator of the youth "Cannonball" championships event at the swimming pool

His extensive service and leadership have not only strengthened Independence but have also provided a guiding light for many communities throughout Oregon. Mayor McArdle's ability to bring people together, champion economic development, and foster collaboration has left a lasting impact on the Mid-Valley region and beyond. His mentorship and willingness to share his expertise have empowered other elected officials to model Independence's success in their own communities.

Mayor McArdle has also been a staunch advocate for public safety, ensuring strong partnerships between the City of Independence and Polk County Fire District No. 1. His efforts in fostering economic growth and enhancing emergency services have created a thriving community where both residents and first responders can live and work with confidence. His commitment to public service earned him the League of Oregon Cities' highest honor, the Mark Hatfield Award—a recognition befitting his extraordinary leadership and contributions.

During his remarkable 26-year tenure, Mayor McArdle spearheaded numerous community-led initiatives that reshaped Independence. From the construction of a new library and amphitheater to the opening of an eight-screen cinema and the revitalization of the downtown district, his vision and determination were instrumental. Recognizing the need for digital connectivity, he championed the groundbreaking partnership with Monmouth to create MINET, delivering high-speed internet to every home and business. His unwavering dedication has left an indelible mark on Independence, and his legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.

It has been an incredible honor to serve as City Manager during Mayor McArdle's tenure. His leadership, vision, and unwavering commitment to the community made a profound impact, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked alongside such an inspirational leader. His mentorship and collaborative spirit not only strengthened our city but also left a lasting impression on all who had the privilege of serving with him.

It is my distinct honor to support SCR 18 and to celebrate the profound contributions of Mayor John McArdle. His leadership has not only transformed Independence but has also set a high standard for public service across Oregon.

Sincerely,

Kenna L. West

Kenna West, JD
City Manager