

Submitter: Mark Powell

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency
Management, Federal and World Affairs

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SCR23

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management,
Federal and World Affairs,

As an advocate for Ukraine and a representative of Cappella Romana, a professional chamber choir dedicated to preserving and celebrating sacred music from Eastern Europe, I write with urgency to express my strongest support for SCR 23—establishing a sister state relationship between the State of Oregon and Cherkasy Oblast. This is not merely a symbolic gesture. It is a lifeline, a declaration of solidarity, and a tangible step in strengthening the economic, educational, and cultural bonds that are critical to Ukraine’s survival and recovery.

For years, Cappella Romana (cappellaromana.org) has brought the voices and traditions of Ukraine to American audiences—most recently through A Ukrainian Wedding, Christmas in Ukraine, and our newly released Ukrainian War Requiem. These programs have illuminated Ukraine’s deep and resilient cultural heritage, a heritage now under existential threat from Russia’s brutal and unjust war. Oregon has the opportunity—and the moral imperative—to stand with the Ukrainian people in their fight for sovereignty, freedom, and democracy.

Cherkasy Oblast, in the very heart of Ukraine, is not only a historical and cultural treasure but a key pillar of Ukraine’s economy. With its expertise in agriculture, manufacturing, and engineering, Cherkasy stands ready to rebuild and grow in partnership with Oregon. Our state, with its innovative farming, environmental leadership, and thriving business sector, has much to offer in return. This is a partnership that will yield immediate and long-term benefits, helping Ukraine not just to endure but to rebuild and thrive.

Yet this resolution is about more than economics. It is about people, culture, and human connection. Over the past three years, Ukraine has fought not just for its own survival but for the democratic values we hold dear. And yet, far too few Americans have had the chance to truly understand Ukraine beyond the headlines. Cherkasy, home to over 9,000 cultural heritage sites and 300 sacred places, offers a gateway to deeper engagement—through student and faculty exchanges, joint academic research, cultural programs, and institutional partnerships. The people of Oregon and the people of Cherkasy have so much to learn from one another, and this resolution will open the door to life-changing connections.

Oregon has always been a state that stands for human rights, for democracy, and for international cooperation. Approving SCR 23 is not just an act of diplomacy—it is an act of defiance against tyranny, a commitment to rebuilding Ukraine, and a clear message that Oregon will not turn away when freedom is under attack.

I urge you to pass this resolution. The time to act is now. Thank you for your leadership and for standing with the people of Ukraine.

Sincerely,
Mark Powell
Executive Director
Cappella Romana