

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Bonham and Members of the Committee, my name is Lisa Taylor. I was Peter Courtney's campaign manager for his 2014 and 2018 campaigns and a staffer in his office from 2015 until he retired.

As an alumnus of the Peter Michael Coleman Courtney Graduate School of Public Service, I couldn't agree more with this resolution: "Peter Courtney's compassion and concern for the people of Oregon will forever be seen as a model for a life of public service and for what can be achieved in service to the public."

I've sat down to write testimony for SCR 10 a few times now, and none of my attempts did justice to the impact Peter had on my life, let alone on the lives of Oregonians. But in reviewing my Peter records I did find something that summarizes my experience working for and learning from Peter.

When I applied for (actual) graduate school, Peter wrote me what I can only describe as a very *Peter* letter of recommendation. So, when Peter decided to retire, I felt it fitting to write him an equally Peter-esq recommendation. I thought I'd just submit that letter for the record:

December 28, 2022

To: Senate President Emeritus Peter Michael Coleman Courtney
From: Lisa Kristine Herzog Taylor

I write in support of Peter Courtney's application for admission to the retired life.

History

I have known Peter Courtney for a little over 8 years. In February of 2014 I met Peter at a Salem Denny's for a job interview. He bought me a Grand Slam and he had oatmeal. By the end of the meeting, he had hired me to be his campaign manager. After a victorious campaign, he brought me on to work in his office, as Assistant Legislative Director for the Senate President. With the exception of 2016, when I went to get my Master's Degree in Washington, I have worked for Senator Courtney ever since.

The Candidate

I managed Peter's 2014 and 2018 campaigns. Peter was the most interesting candidate I've ever worked for. He called me almost every night at 10 pm to ask how things had gone that day, even if we had seen each other only hours before. He did call time on his own but wouldn't make any actual dollar asks, yet every fundraiser was packed and brought in thousands. He hated having to fill out endorsement questionnaires, yet received every endorsement. I would canvass doors and hear stories about Peter canvassing their house years, sometimes decades, ago and coming in for dinner, or spending hours talking about Salem and asking about their family. Everyone knew Peter.

Though Peter tries to deny it, he could not have lost that campaign if he tried. Peter's tireless work ethic, dedication to Salem, and ability to connect with anyone, remember their high school mascot, and where their grandkids go to school, is what won the race.

The Legislator

Peter is a remarkable Legislator. As Senate President, he has given more to the institution of the Legislature than anyone knows. His work to bring together Democrats and Republicans, urban and rural, and even warring branches of his own locker room, made the Senate 'show well'. His legislation- ranging from statute of limitations to seismic resilience, to animal abuse and much more- has made Oregon a better place.

Peter is a great orator. His presentations in committee and on the Senate floor made people stop and listen. When Peter speaks, what he says matters. Even when he was completely ignoring the speech or talking points I had prepared for him, I knew what he was saying was deliberate. He knows how to get his message across. He is a good communicator.

The Person

Peter is an acquired taste. When I tell people I work for Peter Courtney they often ask what it's like. I tell them that Peter is the best boss I've ever had. He is loyal, and I know he always has my back. He knows how to put together a team, and knowing that he choose me for his team gave me confidence in my decision making ability. He has a strong work ethic, I learned the value of showing up and trying hard even when others may not recognize your work. He is an effective communicator, and I have become a stronger speaker and writer working for Peter.

Peter makes it a point to remind all the Senators that they are only as good as their staff. Peter knows how to pick staff that makes him look good. I am honored to be able to call myself a Peter Courtney alumni. While the idea of not working for Peter makes me sad, I know I'll be bringing the skills and knowledge I learned from him into my future roles. I know I will use these skills to improve the lives of my fellow citizens through advocating, creating, and executing good public policy. Any future good I do for Oregon will be owed to Peter Courtney.

I give Peter Michael Coleman Courtney my highest recommendation!

Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to convince you of Peter's talent.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Lisa Taylor
MPA

Footnote: I earned an MPA from The Evergreen State College back in 2018. A program I only got into with the help of an outstanding letter of recommendation from Peter. I am quite sure it is the gold standard of recommendation letters that they likely compare all others to.

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