

Testimony on House Concurrent Resolution 8

Chair Jama, members of the committee, my name is Marc Miller and I am here to testify in support of House Concurrent Resolution 8, honoring Salem's power couple, Vicki and Jerry Berger. I served as Representative Berger's first legislative assistant. How I got that job is worth noting in the history books.

I met Vicki in early 2023 when she was running as a candidate for House District 20. She had been invited to speak to the student senate at Western Oregon University where I was a student. At the time I was serving as the public relations representative for the student government. I was tasked with meeting Vicki at the door of the student union and directing her to where the Senate was meeting. After she spoke, her and I talked more about her campaign and I told her about my campaign to run for Monmouth City Council. When we parted she handed me her business card and said when I started my campaign to give her a call. When the time came I called her and she gave me my first political donation. We both won our races that November and I was determined to work as a member of her legislative staff.

Vicki was hesitant to hire me. I did not have any experience working in the legislature. She already was considering someone else for the job. But I was determined so I had the mayors of both Monmouth and Independence, the city managers of both Monmouth and Independence and several other folks call her to provide her with good references.

A few weeks later Vicki called me and asked to have lunch. When we both sat down she said, “you can have the job if you promise to stop people from calling me telling me I should hire you.”

I served as Representative Berger’s legislative assistant on and off between 2003 and 2006. It was the best job and she was the best boss I have ever had. She was kind, encouraging, and patient. I regret that I did not serve with her longer. I will be forever grateful for the small part of history she shared with me.

I did not know Dr. Berger very well. To me he was the person who answered the home phone and yelled, “Victoria” when I called. I do not believe many people have the option of calling her by that name. I do know that he was a beloved public servant in a variety of capacities; member of the State Board of Education. President of Chemeketa Community College and President of Portland Community College. He was also a devoted husband and supportive of Rep. Berger’s efforts to make a difference in their local community. Whether it was her being the YMCA board president, member of the Salem Health Foundation, the Salem-Keizer Education Foundation or the Oregon State Capitol Foundation.

It is past time to honor two individuals, two statesmen, who’s service has made their local community and the state of Oregon a better place. I encourage you to vote yes on House Concurrent Resolution 8.

Sincerely,

Marc Miller 799 Morning Glory Dr. Independence, OR 97351