

Testimony In Support of SCR 206

Honoring Senator Aaron Woods

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Starr and Members of the Senate Rules Committee:

For the record, my name is Greg Leo, and I am testifying in support of SCR 206, a Resolution honoring my friend Senator Aaron Woods. I speak today as a private citizen.

We honor a man whose service to the City of Wilsonville and the Oregon State Senate left an enduring legacy, whose impact continues through the many people who were fortunate to know him.

Senator Woods was completely at home in public service. Whether on the Senate floor, in conversation with his Wilsonville neighbors, or working through policy details in countless community and political discussions, he carried himself with warmth, curiosity, humility, and a steady focus on the public good.

He genuinely enjoyed public service, and it showed. He listened closely, leaned into debate, and took a sincere interest in the issues facing his community, the tech sector, and the state. From expanding access to technology, to safeguarding Oregonians from the unintended consequences of artificial intelligence, to delivering broadband to underserved communities and unserved individuals. Senator Woods brought both insight and enthusiasm to his work, culminating in his service in the Oregon Senate.

In Wilsonville, his service on the Design Review Board and Planning Commission helped shape the city's future in lasting ways. He turned good ideas into action. As our Senator, he ensured Wilsonville's needs were heard at the Capitol, built coalitions, and delivered results.

The same was true in the Senate, where Senator Woods helped shape how Oregon approaches emerging technology, expanding access while protecting the public in an increasingly digital world. He believed deeply in the promise of innovation when guided by thoughtful public policy, and he worked to ensure its benefits reached all Oregonians.

He also formed enduring friendships with many members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly. With many of you here today, Senator Woods shared experiences ranging from trade missions abroad, to technology conventions in California and a national party gathering in his native Chicago. He deeply valued the friendships he built in the Oregon Legislature and relished the shared sense of purpose and adventure that defined his time in the Oregon Senate.

Senator Woods was exceptionally well served by two outstanding Chiefs of Staff, LaTonya Meyer Blanco and Shane O'Brien, who carried out their roles with distinction and dedication. I want to recognize their professionalism, selfless commitment, and steady ability to keep both people and policy moving forward. Their contributions were essential to his success and much appreciated.

Senator Aaron Woods was deeply devoted to his family. With his wife Shirley, he raised five children: Patrice, Aaron Jr., John, Kimone, and Kara. They were proud grandparents to seven grandchildren. His family was his greatest joy, and he spoke of them often, with the same care and warmth that defined his public service.

Senator Woods and I shared a love of cooking. We routinely traded recipes and stories. Anyone who talked food with him likely heard about the many and delicious uses for the humble, nutritious sardine. He made a remarkable barbecue chicken and spoke with particular enthusiasm about his countertop smoker.

Most of you here today have your own stories of friendship with Senator Woods, an experience or a cause you shared with him, reminding us of our connection with him. In his life of accomplishment, he always had time for a good conversation, a wry smile and a new idea.

In the center of Wilsonville, our city dedicated a bench in Senator Woods' honor on a beautiful summer day last August. Surrounded by his family, and many colleagues from his service on Clackamas Community College board, friends and neighbors from the city where he lived for twenty-seven years, and from throughout his Legislative District gathered to honor his legacy.

I invite each of you to visit this bench in Town Center Park in Wilsonville and take a few moments of quiet reflection in this place of community that Senator Woods loved.

Thank you to the many legislative sponsors of SCR 206 as we honor a man who brought energy, kindness, and accomplishment to everything he did, and whose life reflected a deep commitment to family, service, and community.

I respectfully urge a **DO PASS** on SCR 206, honoring Senator Woods.

Thank you.

Greg Leo, friend of Senator Aaron Woods

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