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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3701

Testimony in Support of SCR 3 Honoring Emily Gottfried
Rep. Suzanne Bonamici
May 6, 2013

It is with both sadness and fond memories that I submit this testimony in support of SCR 3, a Resolution honoring the extraordinary life of Emily Georges Gottfried. My heart is heavy because of the loss that Emily's family and the community are experiencing since Emily's unexpected passing, and because of the void in all of the organizations and groups with which Emily showed compassion and leadership. Without Emily, the rest of us are going to have to step up our commitment to social justice.

When I think of Emily, several things come to mind. First, she was always singing. One of the last times we saw each other, at an Oregon Faith Roundtable Against Hunger breakfast, one of the participants – the one who was going to provide the music – was unable to attend. No problem. Emily picked up her guitar and led the participants in uplifting songs. Hunger is a serious issue and one about which Emily was passionate, but that didn't mean we would have a meeting without music.

Another memory of Emily is about her leading the efforts at Pioneer Courthouse Square on Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, during which volunteers read aloud the names of Holocaust victims. "Unto Every Person There is a Name," the event emphasizes, and Emily was always there. She recruited volunteers, organized the details, made sure every volunteer had a list of names before his or her turn to read, and generally assured that it all went smoothly. I've done this several times and it's very emotional, and especially heartbreaking to realize that many Holocaust victims were children. Reading names for even 15

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minutes was emotionally draining. Emily stayed there all day, listening and honoring those who perished. Although she was caring and sensitive, something about her must have been made of steel.

I also remember Emily from many of the OAJC events she organized, especially the Human Relations Award dinners. These events recognize local businesses and leaders for their deep commitment to our community. Emily was always there, helping to raise awareness of the numerous, dedicated Oregonians who make our region a better place.

Other examples of how Emily's positive presence made a difference are: the OAJC Interfaith Seders, where people from many different religions could participate in a Passover Seder and learn about the holiday; the Human Rights Council of Washington County, where Emily helped to celebrate the diversity of the area; and Interfaith Advocacy Day at the Capitol, where Emily joined Ecumenical Ministries and others to encourage legislators to fight poverty, hunger, and homelessness.

Emily left behind a wonderful family – Jeff, her smart, talented, and funny husband, and her two brilliant daughters Miriam and Benna. She also left behind a community still reeling from the shock of her unexpected and untimely death. Jeff, Miriam, and Benna all know how much Emily selflessly gave to the community, but I have no doubt that they also know how much she gave to them. They will be honored by the passage of this Resolution recognizing Emily.

I ask that you pass this Resolution, but I also urge everyone to do more to fill the enormous space left in our world with the passing of Emily Georges Gottfried.

Testimony of Suzanne Bonamici in support of SCR 3