

ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

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Testimony in Support of SCR 3 Honoring Emily Gottfried House Rules Committee June 5, 2013

Chair Garrett, Vice-Chairs Hicks and Hoyle, and members of the Committee:

My name is Jan Elfers and I am the Public Policy Director for Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO). EMO is an ecumenical association of Christian denominations, congregations, community ministries and interfaith partners who work together to improve the lives of all Oregonians. I am here today to testify in support of SCR 3, honoring Emily Gottfried for her life of service in Oregon.

Emily Gottfried was a Jewish woman of faith and a great Oregonian whose life centered on service in support of the religious values of justice, peace, equity and the unity of all people. Through her interfaith commitments, she ensured that religious communities along with other sectors of society came together seeking common ground for dialogue, service and advocacy. This was clearly seen through her work with the Inter-Religious Network of Washington County and the Human Rights Council of Washington County. Her deep concern for the health and wellness of people living on the economic margins led her to help found the Oregon Faith Roundtable Against Hunger. Her advocacy efforts and organizational affiliations were numerous and included the Coalition Against Hate Crimes, Interfaith Advocacy Day and the Save Darfur Coalition. She was a tireless advocate for justice who believed that all people deserved to be treated with dignity and respect. Emily believed that everyone in our state should have the opportunity to live lives full of possibility no matter their country of origin, religious, cultural or ethnic backgrounds or socio-economic status.

Central to this afternoon's setting, Emily was a firm believer in the democratic process and the importance of civil discourse in the public square. She never shied away from a tough issue—no matter how divisive. Emily found a way to bring together differing viewpoints for thoughtful dialogue, drawing us beyond our narrow interests to those of the greater community. Her leadership in the public arena was a refreshing counter-point to the all too frequent vitriol that characterizes much of our discourse in both the political and religious arenas. She ensured that all perspectives were respectfully shared and that we took time to listen to one another even in disagreement, modeling a behavior that encouraged consensus building and compromise.

While Emily Gottfried is no longer physically with us, her spirit lives on throughout her family, friends, co-workers and all of the people she touched through her all too short life. Emily embodied the best of her faith and the best of what it means to be an Oregonian. Thank you for this opportunity to testify today.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Elfers