

Fiscal: No Fiscal Impact

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 06/04/15

Action: Be Adopted.

Meeting Dates: 06/04

Vote:

Yeas: 3 - Boquist, Ferrioli, Rosenbaum

Exc: 2 - Beyer, Burdick

Prepared By: Erin Seiler, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

In memoriam: Gretchen Miller Kafoury, 1942-2015.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Life of Gretchen Kafoury
- Personal and professional accomplishments
- Trailblazer for and mentor to many women in Oregon politics
- Advocacy for improving access to housing and mental health care

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Gretchen Kafoury, a longtime public servant whose service in the Oregon Legislature, on the Multnomah County Commission and as a Portland city commissioner focused on giving voice to people who had no voice by improving access to housing, health care, mental health care and alcohol and drug addiction treatment, died on March 13, 2015 at the age of 72.

Gretchen Kafoury was born in Walla Walla, Washington, where she graduated from Whitman College in 1963 with a bachelor's degree in music. After graduating from college, she joined the Peace Corps and spent two years in Iran and upon her return, she taught first at Grant High School and then at Portland State University.

She first sought elected office in 1976, when she was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives, serving three consecutive terms. During her tenure, she championed legislation to improve the lives of women in Oregon, including legislation increasing services for victims of domestic and sexual violence, improving credit rights and job flexibility for women and increasing funding and access to high-quality child care for working women and families. Upon concluding her legislative service, she continued her commitment to addressing the needs of those who were disadvantaged, first as a member of the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners in 1984 and then as a Portland City Council Commissioner. During her service to the citizens of Multnomah County and Portland, she helped build a strong system of emergency support services for persons who are homeless, including families, survivors of domestic violence and youths, and worked to reform and expand community corrections and work-release programs and establish programs to address gang violence. She also led efforts to reform and overhaul Portland's homeless and low-income housing programs. She established the Portland Housing Center to increase home ownership among minorities and low-income families and the Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives, Inc. to stabilize housing for families who were victims of predatory lending and championed a two-year planning process that resulted in Portland's adoption of Strategies for Fair Housing.

Upon her retirement from elected office, she taught at the Portland State University (PSU) Mark O. Hatfield School of Government in the College of Urban and Public Affairs, teaching courses addressing topics such as poverty, homelessness and public administration; co-founded the National Education for Women's Leadership of Oregon program at PSU; was instrumental in saving and restoring the Simon Benson House and helped create an archive at the PSU library for the papers of female political leaders. In addition, she served as a commissioner on the board of directors of Home Forward, the City of Portland's housing authority.

House Concurrent Resolution 24 honors, celebrates and expresses appreciation for Gretchen Miller Kafoury and her legacy of outstanding and compassionate service to this state, her diligent advocacy, her numerous achievements and her contributions to this state through her civil service.