

Dear Leader Williamson:

My name is Jack Robertson. From 1974-1982 I worked on the staff of Senator Mark Hatfield in Washington, D.C. I'd like to request that this letter and the attached commentary be formally submitted as written testimony to the House Committee on Rules' consideration of legislation to place two new statues representing Oregon in the National Statuary Hall of the US Capitol.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jack Robertson  
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Honoring Mark Hatfield's Extraordinary Life

What can be accomplished in the course of a single lifetime?

In my view, Senator Mark Hatfield lived the most inspired public life in 20th century Oregon history. I hope his remarkable legacy will be honored with one of Oregon's two new statues proposed for the National Statuary Hall in our nation's Capitol.

Born in Dallas, Oregon, Hatfield was the son of a railroad blacksmith and a schoolteacher. He lived a life defined by compassion for the less fortunate and a set of deep, unshakable principles. By the end of his life, Senator Hatfield had accomplished breathtaking achievements for the people of our state.

Senator Hatfield was a central figure in preserving forever Oregon's most precious ecological wonders. From Oregon tribal reservations to the slums of Calcutta he drew fame as a tireless champion of the sick, the poor and the dispossessed. He risked his political career in early opposition to the war in Vietnam.

He helped found some of Oregon's greatest modern institutions, achieving breakthroughs in medicine, transportation, energy, agriculture and fisheries. These breakthroughs will benefit the lives of millions of Oregonians for centuries to come.

What makes Senator Hatfield's life a singular inspiration?

His public life spanned three decades of unbroken, bipartisan service to the people of Oregon. In that time Senator Hatfield held every major office. He never lost an election. Hatfield accomplished these things, and much more, after surviving battle after battle in the Pacific during World War II.

A crucial moment occurred when he led the first naval landing party into Hiroshima, Japan just weeks after the explosion of the first atomic bomb. He was one of the first Americans to witness first hand the utter destruction at the dawn of the nuclear age. Hatfield believed the bomb probably saved his life. But this lonely walk through the shattered remains helped shaped his views of war for the rest of his life.

Hatfield went on to devote his life to controlling global nuclear proliferation. He became a leading national figure in foreign and defense policy. He was the primary co-author of the nuclear freeze resolution at the height of the Cold War. The resolution helped galvanize public opinion worldwide in favor of radically reducing nuclear arms stockpiles that then totaled the explosive force of over a million Hiroshima bombs. >

Hatfield was a steadfast supporter of soldiers and veterans. But he spent a life fighting what he believed were dangerous and expensive nuclear weapons deployed by both the US and the Soviet Union. These included Soviet SS-18 missiles, the US neutron bomb and the MX missiles – weapons he worried would put hair-triggers on nuclear war. In 1965 he was the only Governor to oppose the country's formal entry into the Vietnam War.

Eventually, Senator Hatfield became Chairman of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee. There is virtually no Oregonian who hasn't had his or her life touched directly by his public legacy.

How did he use this power?

If you love the outdoors, Senator Hatfield's legacy is a central part of your life. He was the primary author of legislation to protect millions of acres of wilderness, stretching from the Hells Canyon Wilderness in eastern Oregon to the Oregon Islands Wilderness at the coast. He also authored legislation preserving 2,000 miles of wild and scenic rivers across Oregon. Hatfield was a prime mover of the Columbia River Gorge Act in 1986, saving one of the greatest natural treasures in the world for future generations. The Mark Hatfield Wilderness area honors these achievements.

As a principle author of the Northwest Power Act (NWP) in 1980, Hatfield insured that low-cost hydropower from the Columbia River and the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) was passed on to Oregon consumers. This saved billions of dollars in energy costs for Oregon consumers over the decades. Hatfield passed a bill that prohibited the transfer of Columbia River water to California.

In 1980 Senator Hatfield also was the architect of the landmark energy conservation provisions of the NWP, among the first of their kind in the nation. The resulting energy savings ended the need for new nuclear power plants. It also provided regional consumers billions of dollars in added savings in their power bills. Conservation also eliminated millions of tons of air pollutants from unneeded coal plants.

The breakthrough fish and wildlife provisions of the Act provided billions of dollars in ongoing BPA funding for the world's most comprehensive environmental restoration program. As a result, over a million salmon now return to the Columbia River. It is the most successful fish and wildlife recovery program on the planet.

If you're a farmer moving your grains to global markets or a port worker, you depended on Senator Hatfield to assure the Columbia River

was dredged each year. If you lived in a rural community you depended on federal timber funds and the balance Senator Hatfield sought between economic and environmental health of Oregon. If you ride MAX, get critical health treatments from OHSU and its exceptional research facilities, or from the Veterans Hospital, or benefit from the health of our off shore environment improved by the Marine Science Center in Newport, Senator Hatfield touched your life.

If you were a Republican or a Democrat Senator Hatfield treated you with equal respect. If you had a different opinion, he valued it. He held a deep, unshakable regard for all human beings. If he knew you or your family was in trouble, he quietly prayed for you. If you were desperately poor and voiceless you couldn't hope for a stronger ally.

Mark Hatfield's life touched us all. It will be felt forever by every successive generation to come. Oregon has a rich history of exceptional leaders, including Chief Joseph and Abigail Scott Duniway. But who will we ever know in our lives to match this man? And who is a better model for future generations to emulate?

For these and many other reasons, I hope Mark Hatfield's extraordinary life will be honored in the National Statuary Hall.

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