

## Enrolled

# House Concurrent Resolution 213

Sponsored by COMMITTEE ON RULES (at the request of Representative Jennifer Williamson)

Whereas Vera Katz was born on August 3, 1933, in Dusseldorf, Germany, to Lazar and Raissa Pistrak; and

Whereas the Pistrak family left Germany for France when Vera was just two months old, and in 1940 they fled invading German armies for Spain on foot over the Pyrenees Mountains, a journey that ultimately led them to New York City; and

Whereas Vera Katz attended Brooklyn College, where she studied dance under the legendary Martha Graham and received a degree in sociology; and

Whereas Vera Katz and her husband, Mel Katz, moved to Portland, Oregon, in the early 1960s, where they raised their young son, Jesse; and

Whereas Vera Katz first became involved in politics as a volunteer in Robert F. Kennedy's 1968 presidential campaign; and

Whereas Vera Katz was elected in 1972 to the Oregon House of Representatives, where she represented the people of her Multnomah County district for two decades; and

Whereas Vera Katz joined with two other legendary Oregon politicians, Norma Paulus and Betty Roberts, to form the Legislative Assembly's first-ever Women's Caucus; and

Whereas in 1977, Vera Katz became the first woman in Oregon history to serve as chair of the Ways and Means Committee; and

Whereas Vera Katz was Speaker of the House of Representatives from 1985 to 1990, becoming Oregon's first female Speaker and just the second woman nationwide to serve in that capacity; and

Whereas during Vera Katz's exceptional and historic career in the Legislative Assembly, she was instrumental in the passage of many pieces of major legislation, including measures related to school reform, gun violence prevention, public records, gender equality and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights; and

Whereas Vera Katz was elected mayor of Portland in 1992 and served three full terms in office; and

Whereas Vera Katz's dozen years as mayor were a defining era in Portland's history, as she led the city through a period of tremendous social change, growth and revitalization; and

Whereas as mayor, Vera Katz championed the arts and education, fought discrimination and celebrated diversity; and

Whereas Vera Katz, a TriMet user herself, was a tireless advocate for public transportation in Portland, leading the way to many lasting improvements, including the Portland Streetcar; and

Whereas Vera Katz's legacy as mayor can be seen all over Portland's urban landscape, from the Pearl District to South Waterfront to the Eastbank Esplanade that was named in her honor; and

Whereas Vera Katz was a fierce protector of the city she dearly loved, and she personally manned Portland's sandbag brigade when the Willamette River swelled above flood stage in 1996; and

Whereas after leaving City Hall in 2005, Vera Katz remained very active in civic life, selflessly volunteering in the community and working for Gallatin Public Affairs; and

Whereas in the words of *The Oregonian*, Vera Katz "reshaped Portlanders' and Oregonians' notions of what their city and state could look like"; and

Whereas Vera Katz faced life's many obstacles, including her three battles with cancer, with unstinting determination, courage and dignity; and

Whereas when an eighth-grade Vera Katz was asked for a school assignment what words she wanted to have put on her tombstone, her response was, "She made a difference."; and

Whereas Vera Katz died peacefully at home on December 11, 2017; and

Whereas Vera Katz will be forever remembered as a pioneering and visionary leader whose career of dedicated public service touched the lives of so many and left an indelible imprint on the State of Oregon and the City of Portland; now, therefore,

**Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

That we, the members of the Seventy-ninth Legislative Assembly, honor and celebrate the remarkable life and accomplishments of Vera Katz and express our gratitude for her contributions to the people of this state; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution shall be presented to the family of Vera Katz as an expression of our sympathy and condolences.

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Adopted by House February 19, 2018

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Timothy G. Sekerak, Chief Clerk of House

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Tina Kotek, Speaker of House

Adopted by Senate February 27, 2018

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Peter Courtney, President of Senate