

HCR 17 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Rules

Prepared By: Josh Nasbe, Counsel

Meeting Dates: 2/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Celebrates the life of Alter Wiener and recognizes and honors his contributions to the people of this state.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Alter Wiener lived a remarkable life as a husband, father, and Holocaust survivor who inspired others to never lose hope and to have love for our fellow human beings. At the impressive age of 92, he passed away in Hillsboro on December 11, 2018, and is survived by his lovely wife, two sons, and a growing family of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Alter Wiener was born on October 8, 1926, in Chrzanów, Poland, to Mordechai and Pearl Wiener. When he was only 13 years old, his father was murdered by German forces following their invasion of Poland. Three years later, German soldiers gave him just three minutes to prepare and pack before deporting him to the Blechhammer forced labor camp. The following year his stepmother and stepbrother were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp and murdered. Over a three-year period, he was imprisoned in five different camps under brutal conditions and he said that he awoke every day not knowing if it would be the day he was killed. During his captivity at the Gross Masselwitz forced labor camp, a German woman jeopardized her life by smuggling him a sandwich every day for 30 days, and he later said of her kindness and heroism: “Her gesture I will never forget, it fortified my belief that people must be judged by their merits, and not by their ethnicity (in the same vein I aver that not all Germans were active participants in the Holocaust).”

When Alter Wiener was finally liberated from Waldenburg concentration camp, he learned that he was one of only six family members who survived the Holocaust and that 123 family members has perished. After spending 14 years in Israel, during which time he married and had two children, he and his family moved to New York to be close to his surviving cousins. He went on to graduate elementary school at age 35 and high school at the age 36 and received an honorary bachelor’s degree from Warner Pacific University and an honorary law degree from Lewis & Clark Law School. After moving to Hillsboro in 2000, he began to give presentations on his life story and his experiences during the Holocaust. He would go on to make nearly a thousand appearances, speaking at schools, universities, synagogues, churches, prisons, and elsewhere to spread his message of love, compassion, perseverance, and living life to the fullest. He received more than 89,000 letters after his presentations, mostly from students, telling him that he had helped to prevent their suicide, to stay in school, to respect their parents, or to be grateful for what they had.

House Concurrent Resolution 17 celebrates the life of Alter Wiener and recognizes and honors his contributions to the people of this state.