

Senate Concurrent Resolution 21

Sponsored by Senator WAGNER

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

In memoriam: Alter Wiener, 1926-2018.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1
2 Whereas Alter Wiener was born on October 8, 1926, in Chrzanów, Poland, to Mordechai and
3 Pearl Wiener; and

4 Whereas when Alter Wiener was 13 years old, his father was murdered by German forces fol-
5 lowing their invasion of Poland in September 1939; and

6 Whereas in June 1942, German soldiers gave Alter Wiener just three minutes to prepare and
7 pack before deporting him to the Blechhammer forced labor camp; and

8 Whereas in February 1943, Alter Wiener's stepmother and stepbrother were deported to the
9 Auschwitz concentration camp and murdered; and

10 Whereas Alter Wiener was imprisoned in five different camps under brutal conditions over a
11 three-year period, and he said that he awoke every day not knowing if it would be the day he was
12 killed; and

13 Whereas while Alter Wiener was a captive at the Gross Masselwitz forced labor camp, a
14 German woman jeopardized her life by smuggling him a sandwich every day for 30 days, and he later
15 said of her kindness and heroism: "Her gesture I will never forget, it fortified my belief that people
16 must be judged by their merits, and not by their ethnicity (in the same vein I aver that not all
17 Germans were active participants in the Holocaust)"; and

18 Whereas Alter Wiener had been a prisoner at the Waldenburg concentration camp for nine
19 months and he weighed just 80 pounds when the camp was liberated by Soviet armed forces on May
20 9, 1945; and

21 Whereas after his liberation, Alter Wiener returned to Poland in search of his relatives and
22 found that only five cousins had survived the Holocaust and that 123 family members had perished;
23 and

24 Whereas Alter Wiener lived in Israel for 14 years, and he married and had two children; and

25 Whereas Alter Wiener and his family moved to New York in 1960 to be close to his surviving
26 cousins, and he became a citizen of the United States in 1966; and

27 Whereas Alter Wiener graduated from elementary school when he was 35 years old and from
28 high school at age 36, and he received an honorary bachelor's degree from Warner Pacific Univer-
29 sity and an honorary law degree from Lewis & Clark Law School; and

30 Whereas after moving to Hillsboro, Oregon, in 2000, Alter Wiener began to give presentations
31 on his life story and his experiences during the Holocaust at Century High School in Hillsboro; and

32 Whereas Alter Wiener made nearly a thousand appearances, speaking at schools, universities,

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted.
New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 synagogues, churches, prisons, companies, book clubs, charitable events and elsewhere to tell his
2 story and spread his message; and

3 Whereas Alter Wiener received more than 89,000 letters after his presentations, mostly from
4 students, with words of appreciation for his message of love, compassion, perseverance and living
5 life to the fullest and telling him that he had helped to prevent their suicide, to stay in school, to
6 respect their parents or to be grateful for what they had; and

7 Whereas in 2007 Alter Wiener published his memoir, *From a Name to a Number*, which was
8 adapted in 2014 into an award-winning children's book by Trudy Ludwig, *Gifts from the Enemy*; and

9 Whereas in September 2018, Alter Wiener told his story to Oregon legislators, appearing before
10 a committee on behalf of a bill that would require education about the Holocaust and genocide in
11 Oregon schools; and

12 Whereas Alter Wiener gave his final presentation at Lakeridge High School in Lake Oswego,
13 Oregon, on December 5, 2018; and

14 Whereas Alter Wiener's presentations helped educate many thousands of Oregonians about the
15 horrors of the Holocaust but also inspired his listeners to never lose hope and to have love for our
16 fellow human beings; and

17 Whereas Alter Wiener passed away on December 11, 2018, in Hillsboro; and

18 Whereas Alter Wiener is survived by his wife, two sons and a growing family of grandchildren
19 and great-grandchildren; now, therefore,

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

21 That we, the members of the Eightieth Legislative Assembly, celebrate the life of Alter Wiener,
22 and we recognize and honor his contributions to the people of this state; and be it further

23 Resolved, That a copy of this resolution shall be presented to the family of Alter Wiener as an
24 expression of our sympathy and condolences.

25
