

SCR 3 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

Prepared By: Oliver Droppers, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/15

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Recognizes and honors Representative Merwyn Ronald “Mitch” Greenlick (1935-2020).

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Merwyn Ronald “Mitch” Greenlick was born in Detroit, Michigan, on March 12, 1935; graduated from Central High School in Detroit in 1952; received a bachelor’s degree in pharmacy in 1957 from Wayne State University, a master’s degree in pharmacy administration from Wayne State University in 1961 and a Ph.D. in health system organization from the University of Michigan in 1967;

Mitch Greenlick and his wife Harriet were married in 1956, together they raised three children and moved with his family to Portland, Oregon, to start the Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research, which he directed for 30 years. Representative Mitch Greenlick was elected to the National Academy of Medicine in 1971; served as vice president for research of Kaiser Foundation Hospitals; and was the first director of the Kaiser Permanente dental program, working toward an integrated model for dental and medical health.

Representative Greenlick was an esteemed educator, serving as a professor and chair of the Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at the Oregon Health and Science University School of Medicine and as an adjunct professor of sociology and social work at Portland State University. Representative Greenlick was the author or coauthor of several books and more than 100 professional publications. Representative Greenlick’s work at Kaiser Permanente and the Oregon Health Sciences Institute brought in hundreds of millions of dollars of funding for health systems and the State of Oregon.

Representative Greenlick was a board member of the Community Action Organization in Washington County and a founding member of the Northwest Health Foundation. Representative Greenlick served on the board of Metropolitan Public Defender, the Public Employees’ Benefit Board and the Oregon State Hospital Advisory Board. Representative Greenlick fought for Oregon’s children and families, and he organized the first Head Start program in Washington County.

Representative Greenlick was a social justice warrior who worked tirelessly to extend health care to vulnerable Oregonians and underserved communities. Representative Greenlick started and led an AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America group that performed vital work in migrant farmworker camps and he was instrumental in establishing a program that provided free medical care to farmworkers-efforts that resulted in the creation of the Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center.

Representative Greenlick first got involved in politics at the age of nine by volunteering for Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s 1944 presidential campaign; and after moving to Oregon, Representative Greenlick worked for a number of Portland and statewide political campaigns. In 2002, Representative Greenlick was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives as a Democrat representing portions of Multnomah and Washington Counties.

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Representative Greenlick was beloved by the community he served, after 2002 never winning an election with less than 64 percent of the vote, and he faced a primary challenger only once, in 2006, an election he won with 92 percent of the vote. Representative Greenlick served with distinction on many legislative committees, including as chair of the House Committee on Health Care for many years, member of the House Committee on Judiciary and chair of the House Committee on Conduct. Representative Greenlick was committed to expanding and improving health care in the State of Oregon, and his leadership and dedication saved countless lives. Representative Greenlick's early and influential efforts to adopt electronic medical records for research purposes would help inspire the use of universal electronic medical records for improved service delivery.

Representative Greenlick partnered with Portland State University and Oregon State University to create the Oregon Master of Public Health Program; the first graduate program in public health in the State of Oregon. Representative Greenlick played instrumental roles in health system transformation in Oregon, beginning in the 1980s with the development of the Oregon Health Plan and continuing with the separation of the Oregon Health Authority from the Department of Human Services, the establishment of coordinated care organizations and the reform of Oregon's public health system.

Representative Greenlick was awarded the 1995 Presidential Award by the Association for Health Services Research for his lifetime achievements in health services research, the 2005 Public Health Genius Award by the Oregon Public Health Institute and the 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award by the Oregon Public Health Association.

Representative Greenlick was a tough and fearless advocate for working class Oregonians, and he was deeply committed to improving their quality of life and giving them the chance to prosper. Representative Greenlick was noted for his integrity, compassion and unwavering moral compass, and he was a beloved (and sometimes feared) mentor for countless students and colleagues.

Representative Greenlick died peacefully at home, surrounded by family members, on May 15, 2020. Representative Greenlick died while serving in office, doing what he loved and working tirelessly for the people of this state. Mitch Greenlick was survived by his beloved wife, Harriet, his three children, Phyllis, Vicki and Michael, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Representative Greenlick was a champion of health care as a basic human right, and he inspired countless others in the fight for justice. Representative Greenlick was a great statesman and a guiding force on Oregon health care policy, and he will forever be remembered for his decades of dedicated public service to the State of Oregon.