

March 9, 2023

FROM: Darka Konopada Stebiwka, Ukrainian-American Performer, Activist

TO: House Committee on Rules

RE: In support of Holodomor Remembrance Day – SB583

Dear Representative Fahey, Representative Breese-Iverson, Representative Kropf, Representative Nosse, Representative Scharf, Representative Valderrama, and Representative Wallan:

On behalf of all Ukrainians in Oregon, I urge you to vote in favor of Senate Bill 583 recognizing Holodomor Remembrance Day.

The Stalin regime manufactured a famine called Holodomor, which became a genocide of the Ukrainian people in 1932-33. Russia has been trying to hide this genocide for 90 years, and now they are attempting to commit another genocide on the Ukrainian people. The Holodomor has been documented by historians for decades: I grew up speaking to my elders who personally witnessed the starvation techniques used by Stalin's henchmen. Every one of my Ukrainian-American friends had similar experiences: We grew up hearing the horror stories of Russians taking a household's "final potato" or their final handful of grain. Russians knew that most Ukrainians had the spark of individuality, freedom and sovereignty in their hearts, as they never succumbed to the full Soviet experiment – and they wanted to do away with this Ukrainian spark. Forced submission did not work, so Stalin instructed his men to simply starve Ukraine to death. Every piece of grain was collected. Every food source was removed. Farm animals were taken or killed.

At this moment, Ukrainian refugees are coming to Oregon to escape Putin's latest attempt to remove Ukrainians from their historical land through mass murder bombing campaigns. Putin's people have stolen over 16,000 children and taken them deep into Siberia to be raised as Russians. He is manufacturing lies and deception in the form of horrible propaganda against Ukrainians, the kind of propaganda you heard from Thomas Busse. It exists to create a false narrative about Russia's historical brutality against Ukraine that has been going on for hundreds of years.

It is so important that Ukrainians and the suffering we have endured be seen and understood by Americans, and the world. The Holodomor did not kill our spirit, only our people, but the spark in our hearts lives on – we want our freedom! Please do the right thing and support SB583, in memory of the millions of innocent lives lost.

Thank you for doing the right thing.

Respectfully,

Darka K. Stebiwka