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Joint Committee on Ways & Means
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Joint Transportation Committee
House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 2, 2024

House Committee on Rules
Oregon House of Representatives
Oregon State Capitol Building
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Ref: House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 203

Dear Colleagues:

HCR 203 reflects a long-term relationship between the State of Oregon and the nation of Taiwan (the Republic of China). As the primary sponsor, I want to share with you the rationale for passing this legislation during the 2024 Legislative Session.

First, Taiwan needs our help. As most people know, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) has significantly accelerated the scale, scope, and intensity of aggression towards Taiwan. The PRC does not recognize Taiwan as a separate nation, but rather as a “rogue province.” Since 1979, the PRC has directly and indirectly bullied the community of nations to accept the “One China” policy. For decades, this policy has effectively denied Taiwan formal diplomatic relations with any nation seeking peaceful trade relations with the PRC. However, until the rise of President Xi Jinping (now likely a President for life), most nations privately traded with Taiwan while doing so in a manner to avoid direct PRC disfavor. Now, Xi has openly committed his country to an integrating its formidable economic, military, and political might into a strategy of isolation.

Second, the State of Oregon can help, at least a little. Foreign policy is rightly considered a federal power. We want our nation to speak with one voice when it comes to our relationships with foreign nations. However, in this case, many within the federal government believe the more statements of public support for Taiwan (consistent with U.S. Ambiguity in terms of US Military Intervention) the better. There is a consensus among the foreign service that Xi understands the consequences of using his military to “take Taiwan back.” It is widely held that the more small-scale public “connections” between Taiwan and the US (and our allies) increases doubt among PRC leadership potentially buying time for Taiwan. This thinking suggests that small actions feed into either greater doubt about the PRC Military ability to succeed without upsetting the global economic power PRC now enjoys, and/or feeds into the PRC hierarchy that Xi may be wrong about his preferred methodology.

Third, Taiwan is a significant trading partner. Recent estimates put Taiwan as our (Oregon’s) ninth largest partner with more than \$2.39 Billion in total value. That relationship is even more critical when weighing the importance of the semiconductor industry in the global economy. Taiwan leads the world in semiconductor manufacturing development. However, semiconductors are not the whole story. Our trade

includes a vast range of commodities and consumables including agricultural products, electrical machinery, medical and optical equipment, and a growing battery-storage development market. It is estimated that the US and Taiwan trade relationship is valued at over \$135.5 Billion and growing. And over this past year, a group of us have worked with the Taiwanese Government and private Taiwan Companies to strengthen our relationship through Taiwanese investment in manufacturing here – bringing jobs back – jobs associated with technological advancements we can share and profit from. In a world where too many countries (and corporations) make important decisions based on costs alone, Taiwan stands among the very few that prize enduring relationships more than ephemeral profits.

Fourth, and most important, supporting Taiwan is the right thing to do. Taiwan is a functional Republic based upon the principles of democracy, free-market capitalism, and the rule of law. Taiwan is a lot like Oregon. It is a people and place that struggle to survive in an area where they are always overshadowed by their neighbors. They take pride in their environment, even as they produce equipment, machinery, and technologies that drive 21st Century creativity and innovation. Taiwan has remained a Republic despite the long-standing intentions of the PRC located just a hundred miles to the West. Unlike so many other nations, the Taiwanese refuse to allow fear to govern decision-making. They believe demonstrating democracy so close to the PRC is the best strategy for establishing long-term peace between the two nations; they practice strategic patience in a manner few, if any, other nations can.

In conclusion, I want you to know that I understand asking for this resolution at this moment may feel uncomfortable. Oregon should not seek out a unitary foreign policy. This resolution is nothing more or less than a public acknowledgement of our existing trade relationship. Passage of the resolution may well play a small, indirect, role in helping Taiwan escape a war with the potential to spark a larger, global contest between China and the US (and some of our allies). As state legislators we cannot often do a lot about the larger threats faced by our nation, state, and communities. But every now and then we get an opportunity to stand up for our beliefs, and in so doing punch above our weight. This is that time. I urge your support for this resolution, and thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Patt', written in a cursive style.