

Carol Suzuki – Testimony on Sen. Dick Springer

Sen. Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp and members of the committee,

Thank you for having me. For the record, Carol Suzuki, with the Senate President's Office though I am here in my personal capacity today.

I appreciate having the opportunity to speak in memory of Sen. Dick Springer. In May of 1994, I was lucky to find a paid internship with the Senate Majority Office and Senate Majority Leader Dick Springer. I was one of three interns hired for a summer internship that paid \$500/month. When the two other interns went back to school, as recent college graduate I was asked to stay on as an office assistant. Working with the Senate Majority Office team was where I fell in love with the legislative process, and I am forever grateful to Dick Springer for hiring me and giving me the chance to be his legislative assistant in 1995. He did not seek re-election, so I was his last legislative assistant.

Dick was a native of Portland and after graduating from Princeton University with a degree in politics, he served as an officer in the Navy including a tour of duty in Vietnam. He earned his law degree at the UO and worked for two years as a deputy DA in Mult Co followed by private practice with a law firm. He served four consecutive terms in the House and elected to the Senate in 1988, re-elected in 1992, and was chosen Senate Majority Leader in January 1993. He was elected Caucus leader again in 1995.

As I was preparing for today's hearing, I went back into the "way back machine" - as President Wagner likes to say. I went into my archives and found op-eds, press releases, IMO pieces and speeches from my time with Sen. Springer along with some older documents.

One of my favorite parts of the job was being in-district with Sen. Springer who represented SW, SE and NW Portland. I put together town halls that featured Sen. Shirley Gold, and Representatives Kate Brown, Gail Shibley that were hosted at the SMILE Station in the Sellwood Neighborhood.

Dick was straight-forward, earnest and dogged in his advocacy on fighting for a living wage and safe jobs, he helped establish the Capitol's first standing Committee on Sexual Harassment and he was an early proponent of annual sessions – I found an op-ed from 1990. Dick was an advocate for sensible protection of Oregon's environment and natural resources. I want to remind everyone that he sponsored, fought for and passed legislation that we might take for granted today as they've always been there but he passed legislation creating a statewide solid waste management and recycling program, expanded the state hazardous waste management program; legislation to clean up leaking underground fuel storage tanks, established a moratorium on oil drilling off the Oregon coast, and worked to update the Forest Practices Act with Senators John Kitzhaber and Bill Bradbury. In one press release he is quoted as saying,

“(we) need to live in harmony with our natural environment and manage growth to avoid adverse consequences. Active citizen involvement in land management policy is absolutely essential if we hope to preserve the beauty of our state for everyone.”

Sen Springer should long be remembered for his many contributions to our state. Dick loved the outdoors so it was no surprise that he later went on to lead the Multnomah County Soil and Conservation District until he retired.

Working for Sen. Dick Springer formed the foundation of my entire career in state government, and I wouldn't be here almost thirty years later without him.