

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs,

I am writing to express my support for SCR 23, which establishes a sister state relationship between the State of Oregon and Cherkasy Oblast. This resolution represents a significant step in strengthening economic and cultural ties between our communities and reaffirms Oregon's unwavering solidarity with the people of Ukraine as they defend their sovereignty and democracy.

Cherkasy Oblast, located in the heart of Ukraine, plays a vital role in the country's economy and culture. With leading industries in food production, chemical manufacturing, machine engineering, and pharmaceuticals, Cherkasy is one of Ukraine's top producers. The region's agricultural strength, combined with Oregon's innovative farming practices and environmental stewardship, presents an excellent opportunity for mutual economic cooperation in Ukraine's time of need. Both regions can benefit from expanded business ties, improved crop yields, and new markets for agricultural products.

In addition to economic partnerships, the sister state relationship will foster educational and cultural exchanges that deepen ties between Oregon and Cherkasy. Over the past three years, the American-Ukrainian partnership has been critical to Ukraine's survival, as the Ukrainian people have fought bravely to defend the same values of democracy, freedom, and human rights that the United States represents on the world stage. Yet too few Americans have had the opportunity to visit Ukraine or engage directly with Ukrainians — and too many Ukrainians know the United States only through headlines. By creating opportunities for student and faculty exchanges, joint academic research, cultural exchange programs, and institutional partnerships, this relationship will strengthen both regions' commitment to education, cultural diplomacy, and international understanding. With more than 9,000 cultural heritage sites and 300 sacred places, Cherkasy's rich history makes it an ideal partner in the effort to foster understanding and awareness between Ukrainians and Americans.

The creation of this sister state relationship not only builds bridges between our regions but also honors Oregon's long-standing commitment to human rights, democracy, and international cooperation. This partnership will serve as a symbol of solidarity and a practical step toward supporting Ukraine's economic and social development during this critical time.

I urge you to support SCR 23 and demonstrate Oregon's steadfast dedication to global partnerships and the defense of freedom. Thank you for your leadership and for considering this important resolution.

Sincerely,

Diane Avenoso