

A Resolution On Public Service, Impact and Gratitude

Whereas Governor Tom McCall in January 1975 told people gathered for a farewell speech at a Portland City Club event, “the decision-making process should not be a method government uses absolutely to tell people what they should want. It should be *a system of communicating, of explaining, of seeking public understanding* because until the people can *see the differences between things*, their power to discriminate among choices is dangerously limited. Only if the people have *all the information that possibly can be gathered* can they become a society exercising truly a freedom of choice. So, I regard *information gathering in a coordinated way* as one of the most obvious but obviously most neglected functions of government. With much better information, *naturally, people can make much better choices;*” and

Whereas members of the Oregon Legislature, at the request of Governor Kate Brown, adopted Senate Bill 106 in 2017 to create the Public Records Advisory Council and the Oregon Public Records Advocate; and

Whereas members of the Oregon Legislature, at the recommendation of Governor Kate Brown, approved 13 grateful members to the Public Records Advisory Council representing cities, counties, special districts, the public sector workforce, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Senate, the House of Representative, the news media and the general public; and

Whereas members of the Oregon Legislature, at the recommendation of Governor Kate Brown, appointed Ginger McCall to serve as the state’s first Public Records Advocate after the Council vetted numerous candidates; and

Whereas through her work, Ginger McCall has created “*a system of communicating*” and mediation to help settle some of the state’s toughest disputes between public agencies and requestors of public information; and

Whereas through her work, Ginger McCall moved to Oregon from Washington, D.C. in the midst of a career “*of explaining*” public records as attorney and on behalf of the requestors of public information and on behalf of government agencies and using that foundation of expertise to organize training events to about 2,000 Oregonian in 18 months, including recent trips to Portland State University, Medford, Klamath Falls, the Oregon Peace Officers Association, Linfield College, the Oregon Department of Human Services, the Oregon Bar, Eugene, the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, the University of Oregon, Bend and many other locations; and

Whereas through her work, Ginger McCall, with the help of a deputy public records advocate and staff from the state archives, has responded to about 250 requests for assistance from Oregonians “*seeking public understanding*” of open records as of September, and in July reported her office was receiving about one request per day; and

Whereas through her work, Ginger McCall, with the help of a deputy public records advocate and staff from the state archives, completed the first Biennial Report of the Public Records

Advisory Council as mandated by the Legislature, which surveyed dozens of public agencies in Oregon to help the public “*see the differences between things*” related to public records; and

Whereas “*information gathering in a coordinated way*” must be done in good faith by, not only public agencies, public servants and elected leaders but by reporters and editors of the news media, and others from the public; and

Whereas through her work, Ginger McCall and the Public Records Advisory Council labored during the 2018 Legislative Session to propose a series of bills to improve access to public information, so that “*naturally people can make much better choices*” when they vote or participate in other public functions of government; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Oregon Public Records Advisory Council:

1. That Ginger McCall’s tireless work to help maintain the public’s trust by holding sacred the value of independence from government influence or public pressure in resolving open-records disputes exemplifies the values identified by Governor Tom McCall; and be it further
2. Resolved that the members of the Public Records Advisory Council understand the original intent by the Oregon Legislature to create the Council and Public Records Advocate as truly independent from influence in order to protect the most important value needed in a relationship between resident and government, trust; and be it further
3. Resolved that the Public Records Advisory Council regrets having to accept the resignation of Ginger McCall, and it pledges to continue the work, intended to be independent of influence by any branch of Oregon’s government, that she helped create for the benefit of this state’s residents and their trust of public leaders and servants; and be it further
4. Resolved that Ginger McCall generated tremendous impact and served Oregon’s public well through her duties as Oregon Public Records Advocate, and be it further
5. Resolved that the Council, which has convened 10 times since 2017, wishes to gratefully express a public farewell and remarkable gratitude to Ginger McCall by using the same words again spoken by one of Oregon’s most iconic governors during his farewell speech to the Legislature in 1975: “May your (next) quest go well. May we continue to find accord and high purpose. May we forever prove that people can join together for mutual benefit and greater good. May we continue to work together. May we face and endure every winter with spring ... forever on our mind.”