

S.B. 323

Written Proponent Testimony
November 11, 2024

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Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Demora and members of the Senate General Government Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony in support of Senate Bill 323 to designate September 28th as Speaker JoAnn Davidson Day.

Ohio House Speaker JoAnn Davidson was more than an extraordinary human being. She was an extraordinary human doing. Volumes can be written on the doing Speaker Davidson did. Excelling at both policy and politics, Speaker Davidson was respected among all others for her fair and inclusive approach to challenge, thus achieving results on both sides of the aisle. In the past weeks we have revisited stories of Presidents, Governors, lawmakers and state staffers paying tribute to the Speaker, who offered them political counsel, friendship and mentorship.

Speaker Davidson could have been Ohio's first female Governor. Maybe she should have been. But she would forego that opportunity to pave the way for so many others. JoAnn Davidson cared passionately about priming future generations to respond to circumstances and the needs of our State. She worked tirelessly to ensure women are prepared to take a place at the table where important public policy decisions are being made. Her final chapter was the JoAnn Davidson Leadership Institute. Since 2001, she has left 487 graduates of the JoAnn Davidson Leadership Institute. Many have been elected to offices, criss-crossing the State: judges, prosecutors, county commissioners, House Representatives, Senators, City, Township and County officials from Defiance to Portsmouth and from Ashtabula to Cincinnati.

Speaker Davidson would probably be surprised that her passing was news far beyond the State of Ohio. The news was carried by the Boston Globe, the Las Vegas Sun and USA Today, just to name a few. Knowing Speaker Davidson as I did, she would not have believed she deserved that attention or this honor. But we know that there is no one more deserving.

Designating September 28th as Speaker JoAnn Davidson Day is what a grateful State can do for this exceptional woman whose life-long doing and her positive influence, will outlive us all.