

SCR23, As Adopted by Senate, September 20, 2017

Senators Meekhof and Hildenbrand offered the following concurrent resolution:

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 23.

A concurrent resolution of tribute offered as a memorial for Vernon J. Ehlers, former member of the Michigan House of Representatives and Senate and the United States House of Representatives.

Whereas, The members of this legislative body were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Vern Ehlers. He was a great man and a true statesman. He will be remembered as a dedicated public servant by his constituents in the west Michigan area, the state of Michigan, and the country; and

Whereas, Vern Ehlers was born in Pipestone, Minnesota, and attended Calvin College before transferring to the University of California at Berkeley where he ultimately completed a Ph.D. in nuclear physics in 1960. He taught and performed research at Berkeley for several years and then returned to Calvin College to teach physics for another 16 years. During this time, he also served as a volunteer science advisor to then-U.S. Representative Gerald R. Ford; and

Whereas, Dr. Ehlers' career in elected office started on the Kent County Board of Commissioners, where he served from the mid-1970s through the early 1980s. In 1983, he was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives. He later moved to the Michigan Senate, first elected in 1985 and serving through 1993 until his election to Congress. Vern Ehlers served 17 years in the U.S. House of Representatives and was the first ever research physicist to join the body; and

Whereas, Vern Ehlers believed in the power of science and technology to improve public policy, increase government transparency, and strengthen our state and nation. He worked on policy and served on committees dealing with health, technology, education, the environment, and natural resources while in the Michigan Legislature. This trend continued into Congress, as he led efforts to pass legislation to clean and protect the Great Lakes and encourage STEM education, only a couple of his myriad accomplishments. Dr. Ehlers was also a fiscal conservative who believed in an efficient, limited government with balanced budgets that spent taxpayer dollars wisely. He contributed valuable ideas and crafted beneficial laws with lasting impacts in his legislative work at the local, state, and national levels; and

Whereas, Throughout his 35 years in public office, Vern Ehlers was known as an honest, hard-working person of the highest integrity. He was looked to for his leadership, calm disposition, and remarkable intelligence. In his career in research and education, many years in public office, and other parts of his life, Dr. Ehlers was a man of distinction and respect. His service will continue to be an example for others to follow in this Legislature, Congress, the scientific community, and elsewhere; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That we offer this expression of our highest tribute to honor the memory of Vernon J. Ehlers, a member of the Michigan House of Representatives from 1983 to 1985, the Michigan Senate from 1985 to 1993, and the United States House of Representatives from 1993 to 2011; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Ehlers family as evidence of our lasting esteem for his memory.