



Legislation Text

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A RESOLUTION honoring Mary Selecky for her decades of dedicated public health leadership and mentorship in Washington State, including her efforts to curb smoking, raise childhood vaccination rates, and prepare for emergencies.

WHEREAS, Mary Selecky devoted more than four decades to public health in Washington State, serving as Secretary of Health from 1999 to 2013 and previously as the Administrator of the Northeast Tri-County Health District, and

WHEREAS, Mary Selecky was appointed as Washington Secretary of Health in 1999 by Governor Gary Lock and retained by Governors Christine Gregoire and Jay Inslee, becoming one of the longest-serving Cabinet members in state history, and

WHEREAS, in fourteen years as Secretary of Health, Mary Selecky led transformative initiatives that saved countless lives, most notably reducing the adult smoking rate in Washington by nearly one-third through a comprehensive tobacco prevention and control strategy launched in 1999, and

WHEREAS, under Mary Selecky's leadership, Washington State dramatically improved childhood immunization rates, climbing from 46th to 16th in the nation by strengthening statewide efforts to support vaccine confidence and access, and

WHEREAS, Mary Selecky prioritized emergency preparedness following events such as the 2001 Nisqually earthquake, the September 11th attacks, and the anthrax scare, significantly enhancing Washington's laboratory and epidemiological capacities and ensuring that the public health systems were ready to respond to crises affecting all communities, and

WHEREAS, Mary Selecky's early work in rural public health included courageous leadership on HIV prevention, including implementing needle exchange programs in communities where such efforts required great care and trust building, and

WHEREAS, Mary Selecky helped Washington become one of the first two state health agencies in the nation to earn national accreditation, setting a standard of excellence for other states to follow, and

WHEREAS, Mary Selecky received numerous honors recognizing years of public service, including the Joe Hopkins Memorial Award from the Washington State Hospital Association, and left behind a public health system stronger, more resilient, and more equitable than the one that was inherited;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF HEALTH OF KING COUNTY:

The Board and Public Health - Seattle & King County express its deep gratitude and highest respect to Mary Selecky for a lifelong commitment to improving the health of all Washingtonians, and affirm that Mary Selecky's impact on public health in Washington will endure for generations to come.