

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 2015-4630, by Representatives S. Hunt, Reykdal, Appleton, Sawyer, Santos, Pollet, Goodman, Moeller, Springer, Magendanz, Sullivan, Chopp, Pettigrew, Van De Wege, Lytton, Orwall, Hunter, Carlyle, Wylie, Gregerson, McBride, Peterson, Kilduff, Kagi, Robinson, Clibborn, Cody, Ormsby, Jinkins, Takko, Blake, Hansen, Stanford, Fitzgibbon, Walkinshaw, Morris, Haler, Caldier, Kochmar, Bergquist, Zeiger, Fagan, Sells, Ryu, Johnson, MacEwen, Manweller, McCabe, DeBolt, and Griffey

1       WHEREAS, Dr. Thomas L. "Les" Purce is retiring from his position  
2 as president of The Evergreen State College in August 2015, after  
3 serving fifteen years in the position and two prior years as interim  
4 president; and

5       WHEREAS, Dr. Purce previously served at Washington State  
6 University as Vice President of Extended University Affairs and Dean  
7 of Extended Academic Programs; and

8       WHEREAS, Dr. Purce is an exemplar of a public servant in higher  
9 education, with his twenty-six year career in Washington state  
10 preceded by public service at the University of Idaho as the Special  
11 Assistant to the President and Director of the Research Park and  
12 Economic Development; election as the first African American elected  
13 official in the state of Idaho, where he served as a mayor and  
14 council member for the City of Pocatello; and service as the director  
15 of Idaho's departments of Administration and Health and Welfare under  
16 Governor John Evans; and

17       WHEREAS, Under Dr. Purce's leadership, Evergreen has been  
18 consistently recognized as a national leader and model in the  
19 development of interdisciplinary learning communities that combine  
20 and coordinate several academic subjects in an innovative approach to  
21 study of the arts and sciences; and

22       WHEREAS, Dr. Purce guided Evergreen's strong promotion and  
23 pursuit of community engagement, curricular innovation, and  
24 development of academic programs that encourage students to apply  
25 classroom learning to practical problems in their professional,  
26 civic, academic, and artistic pursuits; and

27       WHEREAS, Under Dr. Purce's leadership, Evergreen has emerged as a  
28 leader in reducing the length of time and cost required to earn a  
29 bachelor's degree, and has been repeatedly recognized as a top public  
30 liberal arts and science institution by U.S. News and World Report,  
31 the Princeton Review, and Washington Monthly; and

32       WHEREAS, Dr. Purce worked actively with faculty and staff to  
33 achieve above average student engagement on many benchmark measures  
34 of the National Survey of Student Engagement, including level of

1 academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-  
2 faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and  
3 supportive campus environment; and

4 WHEREAS, Dr. Purce strengthened Evergreen's commitment to  
5 serving, educating, and graduating underrepresented students by  
6 establishing the College as a leader for historically  
7 underrepresented, first-generation, and low-income students, and  
8 expanding partnerships with Washington's tribes and military  
9 partners; and

10 WHEREAS, Dr. Purce has overseen the growth of Evergreen's main  
11 campus in Olympia; program in Tacoma; partnerships with Grays Harbor  
12 College, South Puget Sound Community College, and Centralia College;  
13 unique reservation-based program for Native American students at six  
14 locations in the Puget Sound; and more than 400 articulation  
15 agreements with over thirty Washington community colleges; and

16 WHEREAS, Dr. Purce successfully guided Evergreen through the  
17 economic crisis of the Great Recession, while still strengthening the  
18 College's commitment to serving underrepresented students in the  
19 liberal arts and sciences; and

20 WHEREAS, Dr. Purce's professional legacy of true dedication  
21 towards higher education will continue to live on through the  
22 students and faculty he inspired and worked with;

23 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State House  
24 of Representatives recognize and congratulate Dr. Thomas L. "Les"  
25 Purce for his twenty-eight years of service to higher education in  
26 Washington, and for his dedication to quality, efficiency, diversity,  
27 equity, and sustainability in the liberal arts and sciences; and

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
29 immediately transmitted by the Chief Clerk of the House of  
30 Representatives to Dr. Purce and the Board of Trustees of The  
31 Evergreen State College.

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33 I hereby certify this to be a true and correct copy of  
34 Resolution 4630 adopted by the House of Representatives  
35 April 1, 2015  
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Barbara Baker, Chief Clerk