State of Washington
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION
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Memo

To: PDC Commissioners
From: Kim Bradford, Deputy Director
Date: Dec. 4, 2025
Re: Honoring Jolene Unsoeld

Jolene Unsoeld, the former Congresswoman from Washington state, is a pivotal figure in the Public Disclosure Commission's history. Unsoeld got her start in politics as an activist with the Coalition for Open Government helping to draft Initiative 276. She worked to help pass I-276, which created the PDC after garnering 72 percent of the vote in 1972.

Unsoeld subsequently spent years defending the law and, just as importantly, demonstrating the power of it. She spent countless hours poring over the reports that campaigns submitted and promoting the use of the disclosures to Capitol press corps and others. Her compilation and analysis of campaign finance records, titled "Who Gave? Who Got? How Much?," was instrumental in spreading the word about the PDC's trove of information about money in politics and setting the standard for real public access.

Unsoeld died in November 2021. Her sons, Krag and Regon, along with a group of friends that include former state Sens. Sam Hunt and Karen Fraser, retired lobbyist and former Unsoeld staffer Doug Levy, and Rita Robison with the League of Women Voters approached PDC staff earlier this year to ask the agency to consider commemorating her. Out of discussions with members of the PDC executive management group, a few ideas emerged, including:

- Renaming the Commission meeting room for Jolene Unsoeld.
- Establishing a PDC internship in Jolene Unsoeld's name.

PDC staff are seeking the Commission's input and approval to proceed on both items. Next steps could include scheduling the installation of a plaque to mark the room's naming (possibly for the March meeting, which falls near the annual Sunshine Week) and to enter into discussions with The Evergreen State College's master of public administration program about a possible first partnership in the internship program. PDC staff would provide updates to the Commission about the latter as discussions take shape.