



Reba J. Hurn

Quick Facts

Birth: August 21, 1881
Clear Lake, IA

Death: November 13, 1967
Chula Vista, CA

Occupation: Attorney

Party Affiliation: Republican

Years served: 1923-1931

Office: Senator

District: 7 (Spokane County)

Personal:

- Daughter of David William and Grace Harriett Butts Hurn
- Her father was a Superior Court Judge in Spokane
- Taught school, 1905-07
- From 1908-1909 she worked as a private secretary for Nathan Straus, co-owner of Macy's department store. In 1910 she became manager of Nathan Straus Infant Milk Depots. Straus, a philanthropist, was able to reduce the shocking infant and child mortality rate by providing safe, pasteurized milk to the poor by preventing the transmission of bovine tuberculosis and other milk-borne diseases. (Arksey)
- Owned a general law practice in Spokane, 1913-1946
- Served as an economic field secretary for the Y.W.C.A. War Work Council on the east coast, 1918-1919
- Traveled a lot throughout her life, especially to the Middle East and Northern Africa.

Education:

- Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, Iowa, 1899-1901
- Northwestern University, A.B., 1905
- Heidelberg University, Germany, 1907-08
- University of Washington, College of Law, 1913

Community Service:

- Y.W.C.A.

Affiliations:

- American Association of University Women
- Central Methodist Episcopal Church, official board
- Phi Beta Kappa, Northwestern University
- Phi Delta Delta, woman's law fraternity

- Woman's Christian Temperance Union
- Young Women's Christian Association

Legislative & State Service:

- She chose to run for the Senate hoping the novelty of being a woman would wear off by the second session and she "shall have a foothold and be capable of worthwhile constructive work." (Arksey)
- While serving in the legislature Reba Hurn was quoted as saying, "Making a new law is not a solution to problems or an answer to life."
- Strong supporter of the ratification of the proposed constitutional amendment on child labor
- Ran for a third term but lost in the primary election

Committees: (1923) Public Morals, chair; Appropriations; Education; Educational Institutions; Industrial Insurance; Judiciary; Parks and Playgrounds; Senate Employees; State Penal and Reformatory Institutions **(1925)** State Library, chair; Public Morals, chair; Appropriations; Municipal Corporations Other Than First Class; Industrial Insurance; Judiciary; Parks and Playgrounds; State Penal and Reformatory Institutions; Compensation and Fees for State and County Officers **(1927)** Printing, chair; State Library, chair; Appropriations; Constitutional Revision; Elections and Privileges; Judiciary; Municipal Corporations Other Than First Class; Revenue and Taxation; State Penal and Reformatory Institutions **(1929)** Educational Institutions, chair; State Library, chair; Appropriations; Constitutional Revision; Elections and Privileges; Judiciary; Medicine, Dentistry, Pure Food and Drugs; Printing; State Penal and Reformatory Institutions

Senate Bills sponsored:

(1925 regular session)

16-An act in relation to the State Normal School at Centralia and the lands thereof, and repealing Chapter 147, Laws of 1919

Signed by Governor Hartley

(1925 extraordinary session)

77-An act relating to the powers of cities of the first class in regard to public auditoriums and museums and amending Chapter 179 of the Laws of 1923 as amended by Chapter 12 of the Laws of 1925

Signed by Governor Hartley

220-An act making an appropriation for the purpose of defraying the expense of entertaining the National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic

Signed by Governor Hartley

(1927 session)

2-An act appropriating the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) or so much thereof as may be necessary for the printing of the twentieth legislature, and declaring an emergency

Signed by Governor Hartley

151-An act regulating the employment, and providing for the registration, of persons employed for compensation to promote or oppose legislative action, and providing penalties for violation thereof

Went to first reading

201-An act empowering cities and towns to regulate and restrict the height, number of stories and size of buildings and other structures, the percentage of lot that may be occupied, the size of yard, courts and other open spaces, the density of population, and the location and use of buildings, structures and land for trade, industry, residence, or other purposes; empowering such cities and towns to adopt comprehensive zoning plans, to create zoning commissions and to provide for the appointment of Boards of Adjustment

Went to third reading

273-An act creating a Washington State Reformatory for women, providing for the management thereof, making appropriation for construction and maintenance thereof, repealing Chapter 186 of the Laws of 1919 and declaring an emergency

Signed by Governor Hartley

295-An act making appropriations for the payment of salaries of certain officers and employees of the state and for the operation, maintenance and other expenses of certain state institutions, departments and offices, for the purchase of land, the construction of buildings and improvements for the various state institutions designated and mentioned, and for sundry civil expenses of the state government, and creating a reformatory revolving fund, and for miscellaneous purposes for the fiscal biennium beginning April 1, 1927, and ending March 31, 1929, except as otherwise provided, and declaring that this act shall take effect immediately

Went to second reading

(1929 session)

2-An act appropriating the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) or so much thereof as may be necessary for the printing of the twenty-first legislature and declaring an emergency

Signed by Governor Hartley

83-An act relating to the abandonment of township organization, the disincorporation and the winding up of the affairs of townships and defining the powers and duties of certain officers in relation thereto

Went to third reading

164-An act relating to osteopathy and amending Section 10063 of Remington's Compiled Statutes

Reported out of committee and died

165-An act relating to the practice of osteopathy and surgery, defining the term “physician” and amending Remington’s’ Compiled Statutes by adding a new section to Chapter V, Title LXVIII, thereof, to be known as Section 10070-1

Reported out of committee and died

175-An act authorizing and directing counties to give warranty deeds in all cases of resale of real estate owned by the county on which title has been quieted under the provisions of Chapter 171 of Laws of the Extraordinary Session of 1925

Signed by Governor Hartley

263-An act relating to the Washington state reformatory for women, and amending Sections 5 and 17 of Chapter 249 of the Laws of 1927

Went to third reading

290-An act making appropriations for the payment of salaries of certain officers and employees of the state and for the operation, maintenance and other expenses of certain state institutions, departments and offices, for the purchase of land, the construction of buildings and improvements for the various state institutions designated and mentioned, and for emergencies, and for sundry civil expenses of the state government, and for miscellaneous purposes for the fiscal biennium beginning April 1, 1929 and ending March 31, 1931, except as otherwise provided, and declaring that this act shall take effect immediately

Signed by Governor Hartley

302-An act relating to higher educational institutions and establishing a board of higher educational administration, and making an appropriation

Reported out of committee and died

306-An act relating to the expenditure of moneys appropriated for offices and departments of the state government

Went to second reading

Senate Joint Resolutions Sponsored:

(1925 extraordinary session)

4-Providing for the appointment of a committee to make a study of the policy and methods existent in this state, in other states, and under the federal government relating to the sale of state lands and timber

Passed

(1929 session)

3-Relating to the submission of an amendment to Article III of the State Constitution relating to the executive officers

Reported out of committee and died

13-Relating to the submission of an amendment to Section 3 of Article II of the Constitution relating to legislative apportionment

Went to third reading

Leadership, Positions & Appointments:

- Nominated for President Pro Tem of the Senate, 1929
- Secretary for the National Prohibition Defenders, early 1930s
- Ran for Superior Court Judge in Spokane County but was defeated, 1936
- Asked twice, during President Eisenhower’s administration, to join a people-to-people mission to the Middle East. She was assigned to bring back her impression of the progress being made toward the emancipation of all women in those countries. (Hinsch)

Sources:

Articles:

- Arksey, Laura, “Dutiful Daughter to Independent Women,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Fall 2004
- Arksey, Laura, “A Lady in the Senate.” *Columbia*, Fall 2005
- Dakin, Dorothy, “Ladies’ Chapeaux Tasteful Addition to Political Ring,” *The Spokesman-Review*, October 12, 1958
- Hinsch, Kathryn, “Political Pioneer: A Woman Senator,” *Landmarks, Magazine of Northwest History and Preservation*, Summer 1982
- “State Has First Woman Senator, Says She Has No Bills to Push,” *The Seattle Daily Times*, November 12, 1922
- “Death Claims Reba Hurn, 86, in California,” *Spokane Chronicle*, November 14, 1967

Books:

- Binheim, Max and Charles A. Elvin. *Women of the West, A Series of Biographical Sketches of Living Eminent Women in the Eleven Western States of the United States of America*. Publishers Press, Los Angeles, 1928
- James-Wilson, Jennifer and Brenda Owings-Klimek. “Reba Hurn—A Stranger in a Strange Land,” *Making a Difference: A Centennial Celebration of Washington Women, vol.2*. State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1992