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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Senator Kwame Raoul was told he had big shoes to fill when he was appointed to the Senate seat vacated by then-Senator Barack Obama in 2004, but he proved quickly that he was not the "next" Barack Obama but rather the first Kwame Raoul; and

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WHEREAS, Over the next decade and a half, Senator Raoul became a leader in the Senate, a trusted negotiator, someone willing to work across the aisle, and a fighter who never shied away from a difficult issue; and

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WHEREAS, Senator Raoul was a tireless champion for the people of the 13th Senate District, addressing the issues they care about most, including criminal justice reform, stopping gun violence, workers' rights, and access to affordable health care; and

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WHEREAS, Senator Raoul is the proud son of Haitian immigrants, Dr. Janin Raoul and Marie Therese Raoul, and he is a lifelong resident of the Hyde Park/Kenwood area; and

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WHEREAS, Senator Raoul was greatly influenced by the work of his father, a community physician who believed in health care as a human right; and

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1 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul pursued a law degree from
2 Chicago-Kent College of Law and began his career as a
3 prosecutor in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, where
4 he advocated for victims of crime and for child protection; and

5 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul continued his public service as a
6 labor and employment attorney for the City Colleges of Chicago;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Upon arriving in Springfield, Senator Raoul
9 quickly gained the confidence of Senate leadership to handle
10 difficult negotiations, from workers' compensation reform and
11 redistricting to one of the most contentious legislative issues
12 in recent memory, comprehensive public employee pension
13 reform; and

14 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul's experience as a prosecutor led him
15 to continually advocate for criminal justice reform in the
16 Senate, passing historic legislation to abolish the death
17 penalty, introducing innocence legislation allowing
18 vindication for the falsely accused, and sponsoring numerous
19 diversion and second-chance programs for ex-offenders; and

20 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul has seen firsthand the impact gun
21 violence has on communities, having close friends who lost

1 their children to gun violence and experiencing it on the
2 street outside his home; and

3 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul therefore made fighting gun
4 violence a priority during his time in the Senate, cracking
5 down on repeat gun offenders, increasing treatment options for
6 those impacted by the trauma of violence, and introducing
7 legislation banning the use of bump stocks and trigger cranks;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul saw the great need to improve
10 police-community relations and passed landmark law enforcement
11 reform, including standards for officer-worn body cameras to
12 increase trust and transparency; and

13 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul was commended for his work for
14 victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, passing the
15 Sexual Assault Survivor's Bill of Rights and sponsoring a plan
16 to shield victims of domestic violence from liability if they
17 terminate their lease early to escape an abusive situation; and

18 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul dedicated himself to strengthening
19 and protecting voters' rights, passing the Illinois Voting
20 Rights Act to protect racial and language minorities and
21 increase transparency and public participation in the
22 redistricting process, and passing legislation to end

1 Illinois' participation in the flawed Interstate Voter
2 Registration Crosscheck Program; and

3 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul distinguished himself as a skilled
4 negotiator by leading the Senate's 2011 workers' compensation
5 reforms, which have saved employers hundreds of millions of
6 dollars; and

7 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul, who would always draw inspiration
8 from his own life when bringing issues to the Senate floor,
9 received perhaps his greatest test yet when he was diagnosed
10 with prostate cancer; and

11 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul recognized that early detection and
12 treatment were key to surviving the same disease that took the
13 life of his father and grandfather, which only strengthened his
14 determination to ensure everyone in Illinois has access to
15 affordable, quality health insurance and to serve as a personal
16 mentor to others who have been diagnosed; and

17 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul has been a member of the board of
18 directors of International Child Care, a non-profit
19 organization that operates Grace Children's Hospital in Port au
20 Prince, Haiti, and has been involved in efforts to rebuild the
21 hospital's inpatient building, which was destroyed in an
22 earthquake in 2010; and

1 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul serves on the board of Legal Prep
2 Charter Academies and was on the board of the Cook County Bar
3 Association; he is a member of 100 Black Men and the Kappa
4 Alpha Psi Fraternity; and

5 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul is the proud father of two children,
6 Che and Mizan, and recently became engaged to the wonderful and
7 brilliant Dr. Lisa Moore; and

8 WHEREAS, Senator Raoul is leaving the Senate to become
9 Attorney General of Illinois, a position in which he will no
10 doubt remain a champion for the people of Illinois and continue
11 his life's work pursuing equality and justice; therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL
13 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we thank Senator Kwame
14 Raoul for his years of service to the people of Illinois and
15 honor him with this resolution; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
17 presented to Senator Raoul as a symbol of our gratitude and
18 with our best wishes for all his future endeavors.