



HR0189

LRB104 12736 ECR 23767 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Jerry
4 "Iceman" Butler, a towering figure in American music, a
5 trailblazing public servant, and a cherished son of Illinois,
6 who passed away on February 20, 2025; and

7 WHEREAS, Born to sharecropper parents in Mississippi,
8 Jerry Butler's journey was one of perseverance, talent, and
9 profound impact; at the age of three, his family sought
10 greater opportunity in Chicago, where he attended James A.
11 Sexton School and later studied at Washburne Trade School,
12 preparing for a career as a chef before his extraordinary
13 musical gifts set him on a different path; and

14 WHEREAS, Jerry Butler's rich, soulful, and unmistakable
15 voice became the soundtrack of a generation; as a founding
16 member of The Impressions, he performed globally with the
17 group, pioneering the Chicago Soul sound that blended gospel
18 roots with R&B; his contributions were recognized with his
19 induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1991; and

20 WHEREAS, Jerry Butler's solo career saw unparalleled
21 success with chart-topping hits, such as "For Your Precious
22 Love", "Only the Strong Survive", and "Never Gonna Give You

1 Up"; as a three-time Grammy Award nominee, his music has been
2 sampled and revered by many modern artists, including Missy
3 Elliott, Snoop Dogg, Method Man, and The Game, proving his
4 lasting influence across generations; and

5 WHEREAS, Beyond the stage, Jerry Butler was a man of
6 service, leadership, and commitment to his community; he
7 served as a Cook County Commissioner representing the 3rd
8 District, which included parts of Chicago's South Side, from
9 1985 to 2018; with the backing of Chicago Mayor Harold
10 Washington, he embarked on a remarkable 32-year political
11 career, where he chaired the Health and Hospitals Committee
12 and worked tirelessly to expand access to health care for
13 underserved communities; and

14 WHEREAS, During his time in public service, Jerry Butler
15 found his true passion of ensuring health care for all, and one
16 of his most notable achievements was playing a key role in the
17 opening of John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital, a critical healthcare
18 institution serving Cook County residents regardless of their
19 ability to pay; and

20 WHEREAS, Dedicated to the well-being of fellow artists,
21 Jerry Butler chaired the Rhythm and Blues Foundation, pushing
22 for retirement and medical benefits for musicians who had
23 given their lives to the industry but often lacked financial

1 security in their later years; and

2 WHEREAS, Never one to stop learning, Jerry Butler earned
3 his master's degree in public administration from Governors
4 State University while continuing his work as a public
5 servant, a testament to his commitment to education, progress,
6 and the betterment of his community; and

7 WHEREAS, Jerry Butler's life was enriched by the
8 unwavering love and partnership of his wife, Annette Butler,
9 who he was married to for over six decades until her passing;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Jerry Butler leaves behind a legacy carried
12 forward by his sons, Anthony and Randy, his four
13 grandchildren, his great-grandchild, and an entire city and
14 music industry forever shaped by his talent, vision, and
15 dedication to justice and progress; therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
17 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
18 we mourn the passing of Jerry "Iceman" Butler, a musical
19 pioneer, a public servant, and an icon of Illinois, and extend
20 our sincere condolences to his family, friends, and all who
21 knew and loved him; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
2 presented to the family of Jerry Butler as an expression of our
3 deepest sympathy.