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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of Paul R. Booth of Washington, D.C., who passed away on January 17, 2018; and

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WHEREAS, Paul Booth was born in Washington, D.C. on June 7, 1943; he was greatly influenced by his parents, who were both Socialist Party members; his mother was a psychiatric social worker, and his father was an economist with the Department of Labor, who helped craft social security during the Roosevelt administration; he graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in 1957 and from Swarthmore College in 1961; during his sophomore year, he attended a National Student Association conference and was so impressed with the Students for a Democratic Society's (SDS) founder, Tom Hayden, that he decided to form an SDS group at Swarthmore; the group grew into one of the largest in the country; and

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WHEREAS, Paul Booth was described as a rare "cheerful spirit" in the sometimes contentious drafting of the SDS 1962 manifesto, singing and telling stories to maintain morale; and

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WHEREAS, Paul Booth was a progressive activist who organized one of the first major rallies against the Vietnam War in Washington, D.C. in 1965; and

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1 WHEREAS, Paul Booth met his future wife, Heather Tobis, at
2 a University of Chicago sit-in protesting the selective service
3 in 1965; after three days on the floor of the school's
4 administration building, he asked her to marry him; from that
5 day forward, he partnered with Heather on a significant number
6 of projects, including the founding of the Midwest Academy, a
7 training center that influenced thousands of organizers for
8 unions, student and women's rights groups, and environmental
9 peace, civil rights, and community organizations; and

10 WHEREAS, Paul Booth's politics were aligned with "the left
11 wing of the possible," and he believed in a policy of "build,
12 not burn," which kept "contact with ordinary people and
13 mainline institutions"; and

14 WHEREAS, Paul Booth, a protege of community organizer Saul
15 Alinsky, left SDS to become a labor organizer in 1966; he
16 worked on environmental issues in Chicago and then became the
17 research director for the United Packinghouse Workers of
18 America; and

19 WHEREAS, Paul Booth served with the American Federation of
20 State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) for over 40
21 years, and he helped found AFSCME Council 31; he served as
22 Assistant Director in the 1970s and rose to the position of

1 Executive Assistant/Chief of Staff for union Presidents Gerald
2 McEntee and Lee Saunders; and

3 WHEREAS, Paul Booth was instrumental in negotiating and
4 administering the first contracts for the State of Illinois and
5 City of Chicago employees, "further speeding the demise of the
6 patronage system," according to a report from the Chicago
7 Tribune; and

8 WHEREAS, Paul Booth was the International Union's Area
9 Director in Illinois in the late 1980s; he was one of the
10 architects of the law that won collective bargaining rights for
11 public employees in the state; prior to the passage of the
12 Illinois Public Employee Labor Relations Act in 1983, there was
13 no legal guarantee of the right to union representation for
14 public sector workers; after the law passed, he worked as the
15 Chief Strategist and organized drives across the state and
16 country to help tens of thousands of public employees in
17 cities, counties, school districts, and state universities
18 gain union representation; and

19 WHEREAS, Paul Booth was credited with organizing a
20 coalition in Baltimore that successfully pressed for the
21 country's first living-wage law; this 1994 law formed the seeds
22 of the recent Fight for \$15 movement, an issue that became part
23 of the Democratic Party's 2016 national convention platform; he

1 was selected by Hillary Clinton to be a member of the committee
2 that wrote that platform; and

3 WHEREAS, Paul Booth's impressive resume cannot capture
4 everything he brought and meant to AFSCME in particular, and
5 the union movement in general; his leadership helped the union
6 grow and thrive, and become more diverse and dynamic; he was a
7 gifted organizer, who combined passionate idealism with
8 strategic smarts; and

9 WHEREAS, Even on the day he died, Paul Booth worked on an
10 article for the American Prospect and encouraged his wife to
11 attend a demonstration on Capitol Hill, where she was arrested
12 while protesting on behalf of "Dreamers"; and

13 WHEREAS, Paul Booth was known as a man of generosity,
14 decency, and integrity, who, as a mentor and teacher, believed
15 in paying it forward to the next generation of activists; and

16 WHEREAS, Paul Booth is survived by his "powerhouse" wife,
17 Heather; his loving sons, Eugene and Daniel; his five adored
18 grandchildren; and his many friends and admirers; therefore, be
19 it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL
21 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of

1 Paul R. Booth and extend our sincere condolences to his family,
2 friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
4 presented to the family of Paul Booth as an expression of our
5 deepest sympathy.