



HR0350

LRB101 12083 MST 59607 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 former
4 Illinois State Representative and State Senator Don Totten, who
5 passed away on April 2, 2019 at the age of 86; and

6 WHEREAS, Sen. Totten was born in Brooklyn, New York on
7 April 30, 1945 and grew up in New Jersey; he earned a
8 bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the
9 University of Notre Dame; and

10 WHEREAS, Sen. Totten married his high school sweetheart
11 Joyce Anderson, his wife of 63 years who preceded him in death
12 last June; they began a life together that produced four
13 children and grew to include seven grandchildren and one
14 great-grandchild; and

15 WHEREAS, Their first daughter, Donna, died of leukemia at
16 the age of 7; a longtime friend said this defining moment
17 created Sen. Totten's remarkable affinity for people and his
18 understanding of human suffering; and

19 WHEREAS, After he graduated from Notre Dame, Sen. Totten
20 spent several years working as an engineer, but politics,
21 informed by a love of the world's greatest thinkers stretching

1 back to Ancient Greece, soon became central in his life; and

2 WHEREAS, Sen. Totten began his political career as a
3 Schaumburg Township Republican Committeeman; in 1972, he was
4 elected to the Illinois House of Representatives, where he
5 served eight years; he then served two years in the Illinois
6 Senate; and

7 WHEREAS, During his tenure, Sen. Totten served on the
8 Appropriations, Transportation, and Revenue Committees, and
9 was the chief sponsor of the Taxpayers Rights Amendment, a
10 constitutional amendment to limit state taxes; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1976, Sen. Totten was the Illinois and Midwest
12 campaign director for then-presidential candidate Ronald
13 Reagan, trying to unseat incumbent Republican President Gerald
14 Ford as part of the grassroots army that thought the Nixon-Ford
15 Administration had strayed too far into big government and too
16 close to the Soviet Union; and

17 WHEREAS, Sen. Totten remained loyal to Ronald Reagan, and,
18 in 1980, after serving again as presidential candidate Reagan's
19 Illinois and Midwest campaign director, Reagan won the
20 Republican nomination and eventually the White House; Sen.
21 Totten's dedication led him all the way to President-elect
22 Ronald Reagan's transition team; he was later appointed by

1 President Reagan to the International Joint Commission, a body
2 that handles United States and Canadian affairs; and

3 WHEREAS, Sen. Totten was also chairman of the Cook County
4 Republican Party; in 1982, he ran unsuccessfully, on the
5 Republican side, for lieutenant governor, losing to the
6 eventual governor, George Ryan; and

7 WHEREAS, Sen. Totten later founded and served as the
8 national chairman for the American Legislative Exchange
9 Council, a Washington-based organization of state lawmakers
10 dedicated to the principles of limited government, free
11 markets, and federalism; and

12 WHEREAS, Sen. Totten was also a member of the board of
13 directors of the Illinois Conservative Union, former
14 vice-chairman of the National Council of State Legislators,
15 vice-president of the National Tax Limitation Committee, and
16 chairman of the Illinois Tax Limitation Committee; and

17 WHEREAS, Sen. Totten also served as assistant to the
18 director of the Department of Transportation for the State of
19 Illinois and as president of a firm specializing in government
20 relations, management, and political consulting; and

21 WHEREAS, Sen. Totten suffered for much of his life from

1 Bell's palsy, a condition that made the left side of his face
2 droop, and while he was not known as a natural public speaker,
3 he was one of the greatest listeners in politics, always eager
4 to hear other's stories; and

5 WHEREAS, Sen. Totten was a strong believer in America and
6 welcoming newcomers to this country, helping to inculcate them
7 in the principles of the American Declaration of Independence
8 and the United States Constitution; he took great pleasure in
9 helping people navigate the immigration and citizenship
10 process; therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
12 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
13 we mourn the passing of former Illinois State Representative
14 and State Senator Don Totten and extend our sincere condolences
15 to his family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be
16 it further

17 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
18 presented to his sister, Barbara Hellenack, and his children,
19 Kathy Weber, Diane Faldstein, and Robert Totten.