



HR0459

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives wish to congratulate Jessica Basham on her two
4 decades of service to the people of Illinois, as a Research
5 Analyst, Director of Research & Appropriations, and Chief of
6 Staff to House Speakers Michael J. Madigan and Emanuel "Chris"
7 Welch; and

8 WHEREAS, Jessica Basham's steady leadership, collegiality,
9 and expertise have immeasurably enhanced the House Democratic
10 Staff and allowed the House Democratic Caucus, the House of
11 Representatives, and the State of Illinois to adapt to address
12 many challenges; and

13 WHEREAS, While serving as the lead staffer responsible for
14 working with the House Revenue & Finance Committee, Jessica
15 Basham's expertise on state finance, taxation, gaming, and
16 more proved invaluable to legislators and fellow staff; when
17 federal funds became available to help Illinois weather the
18 Great Recession, she took charge of navigating the many
19 regulations and requirements accompanying that funding,
20 developing an understanding that not only helped people
21 throughout Illinois through a financially perilous time but
22 also would again prove critical in responsibly managing
23 federal American Rescue Plan Act funds during the COVID-19

1 pandemic; and

2 WHEREAS, Jessica Basham served as Director of the House
3 Democratic Research & Appropriations Unit, where her
4 leadership proved instrumental in navigating one of the most
5 difficult times in Illinois' financial history; working with
6 legislators from both sides of the aisle, she and her team
7 helped craft the bipartisan budget and revenue package that
8 ended a period of more than 700 days without a full state
9 budget and began the process of restoring fiscal health to the
10 State; and

11 WHEREAS, Even while facing unprecedented challenges,
12 Jessica Basham took time to develop and mentor young
13 professionals beginning their careers with the House
14 Democratic staff; dozens of Research & Appropriations staffers
15 learned from her how to succeed at their job, how to write the
16 in-depth and understandable bill analyses House members use to
17 summarize complex issues, and how to identify blind spots and
18 navigate difficult situations; and

19 WHEREAS, Jessica Basham became Chief of Staff to the House
20 Speaker in June 2018, becoming the first woman in Illinois
21 history to serve in such a role; she undertook a multifaceted
22 effort to update and improve the operations of the House
23 Democratic staff, creating the unit's first Human Resources

1 Department, expanding recruitment, training, and onboarding
2 practices, and ensuring all staff feel respected and
3 appreciated in the workplace; and

4 WHEREAS, Legislators on both sides of the aisle have come
5 to appreciate Jessica Basham's integrity and accessibility as
6 she has worked to improve communication, act on feedback, and
7 help members achieve their goals; and

8 WHEREAS, Jessica Basham's experience and leadership have
9 facilitated the historic transition to the first new House
10 Speaker in a generation; as Chief of Staff to Speaker Emanuel
11 "Chris" Welch, she continued to improve and modernize the
12 operation of the House Democratic Caucus and staff while
13 maintaining the key elements of its success; and

14 WHEREAS, Jessica Basham concluded her service as Chief of
15 Staff in June 2021 with a stronger and more diverse House
16 Democratic Staff and a state budget that has restored
17 Illinois' fiscal health and led to the first credit upgrades
18 in a generation; and

19 WHEREAS, The members of the House Democratic Staff for
20 whom Jessica Basham has been a friend and mentor and the
21 lawmakers for whom she has been a resource and advocate are all
22 grateful for her dedication, her poise, and her commitment to

1 others; and

2 WHEREAS, In addition to a career dedicated to service,
3 Jessica Basham is a caring daughter, sister, and stepmother
4 and a proud new grandparent along with her partner John
5 Lowder; and

6 WHEREAS, Those who have worked alongside Jessica Basham
7 have also seen her many passions, including hiking, art,
8 visiting the National Parks, an abiding love for her two cats,
9 Lewis and Clark, and the music of Metallica; and

10 WHEREAS, Jessica Basham's hard work and tireless
11 commitment to those around her helped to make the work of this
12 chamber possible, and her lasting contributions will continue
13 to be appreciated by those with whom she has worked;
14 therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
16 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
17 we commend Jessica Basham for her service to the House of
18 Representatives and the State of Illinois as a Research
19 Analyst, Director of Research & Appropriations, and Chief of
20 Staff and wish her the best in all future endeavors; and be it
21 further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
2 presented to Jessica Basham as a symbol of our esteem and
3 respect.