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LRB102 26423 MST 36756 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 Harold
4 Byers of Highland, who passed away on December 9, 2021; and

5 WHEREAS, Harold Byers was born in Folsomville, Indiana to
6 Ella Mae and Harold J. Byers on October 6, 1935; he married
7 Nancy Reinke on December 3, 1955; and

8 WHEREAS, Harold Byers began his career as a teacher and
9 basketball coach for five years; he spent the remainder of his
10 career in the textbook business, first as a sales
11 representative for McGraw-Hill and later as owner of B&B Book
12 Supply; he devoted his entire life to promoting libraries and
13 encouraging people to read and learn; and

14 WHEREAS, Harold Byers served as a state representative in
15 the Illinois General Assembly and was a champion of civil
16 rights and equal rights for all; his support for the Equal
17 Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution as a downstate
18 legislator earned him the wrath of Phyllis Schlafly and Anita
19 Bryant, which he proudly wore as a badge of honor; and

20 WHEREAS, Harold Byers was a progressive on civil rights
21 and social issues, though he was a fiscal conservative who

1 believed in balanced budgets, and was a true watchdog of
2 taxpayer dollars; and

3 WHEREAS, Harold Byers' first bill as a freshman legislator
4 changed Illinois history by reforming the manner in which
5 state legislators were paid; on his first day in office, he
6 learned that a century old Illinois law required all
7 legislators to be paid their entire annual salary on the day
8 they were sworn in; he sponsored a bill, now law, that required
9 legislators to be paid on a monthly basis only after they
10 worked each month; his bill and law won the support of 635,138
11 grateful Illinois voters who signed petitions to help win
12 passage of the long overdue legislative salary reform; and

13 WHEREAS, Harold Byers was a caring legislator who won
14 passage of many important laws, including consumer
15 protections, nursing home reform, political ethics reform, and
16 help for working people who lived from paycheck to paycheck;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, Harold Byers was fiercely and fearlessly
19 independent as a legislator; he was awarded the Outstanding
20 Legislator Award from the Independent Voters of Illinois for
21 each of the two terms he served in the Illinois House of
22 Representatives; he believed in opening government to the
23 public and press; and

1 WHEREAS, Harold Byers was a member of the Madison County
2 Board for 16 years, where he again served as a watchdog of
3 taxpayer dollars; during his tenure, he became highly
4 distressed that Madison County was without a county health
5 department; he was disturbed that county residents were forced
6 to travel to adjacent counties, Bond and Clinton, to obtain
7 vaccinations for their young children; he therefore, as an
8 advocate for good healthcare for all, was instrumental in the
9 establishment of the Madison County Health Department; and

10 WHEREAS, Harold Byers served on the Metro East Park and
11 Recreation District, helping to improve the district's park
12 system for the betterment of the Metro-East area; and

13 WHEREAS, Harold Byers was appointed to the Illinois State
14 Board of Elections by Governor Pat Quinn, where he served for a
15 number of years and worked tirelessly to assure Illinois
16 elections remained free and fair for all; and

17 WHEREAS, Every year on his birthday, Harold Byers and his
18 wife Nancy organized a bean dinner at their home, where dozens
19 of friends came to celebrate and raise funds for the local food
20 pantry; and

21 WHEREAS, Harold Byers was a member of the Evangelical

1 United Church of Christ in Highland; he had a generous spirit
2 and lived his life to the fullest, enjoying his travels across
3 America and his worldwide excursions; he enjoyed attending
4 sporting events and was an avid fan of both horse racing and
5 the Chicago Cubs; he was thrilled to see his Cubs win the 2016
6 World Series and proudly attended one of the World Series
7 games in Chicago to root for his team; and

8 WHEREAS, Harold Byers was preceded in death by his
9 parents; his sister, Elaine Grundhoefer; his brother, Ronald
10 Byers; and his daughter-in-law, Deborah Byers; and

11 WHEREAS, Harold Byers is survived by his loving wife of 66
12 years, Nancy; his children, Cheryl Byers, Sheila Byers (Rich
13 Ullman), Keith (Patricia) Byers, Lana (Willard) Herman, Greg
14 (Jane) Byers, Jeff Byers (Angela Schmidt), and Phil Byers; his
15 grandchildren, Mandy Eyrich, Kim Fulton, Ashley Dickey,
16 Margaret Byers, Eric Byers, Katelyn Kuk, Catherine Byers, Tara
17 Byers, Maxwell Byers, Jennifer Ullman, Elaine Herman, Peter
18 Byers, and Hannah Clifford; his great-grandchildren, Emmaline
19 Eyrich, Spencer Eyrich, Emmalyn Dickey, Nora Dickey, Henry
20 Dean Byers, Briella Byers, Miles Fulton, Grayson Davis, and
21 Cameron Kuk, with two more on the way; and his brothers, Gary
22 and Sam Byers; therefore, be it

23 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE

1 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
2 we mourn the passing of Harold Dean Byers and extend our
3 sincere condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew
4 and loved him; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
6 presented to the family of Harold Byers as an expression of our
7 deepest sympathy.