



SR0556

LRB102 20580 LAW 29450 r

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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 Elizabeth Ann Weidner of Dieterich, who passed away on September 29, 2021; and

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WHEREAS, Elizabeth Weidner was born to Matthew and Jennifer (McCabe) Weidner in Effingham on January 2, 2004; she was named First Baby of the Year at St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital; she was given the title of "Queen Elizabeth" by her great-grandfather, Albert, who affectionately called her "Queenie" growing up; and

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WHEREAS, Elizabeth Weidner was diagnosed with Stage 4 High Risk Neuroblastoma in January 2016; she underwent numerous surgeries, chemotherapy, radiation, bone marrow transplant, immunotherapy, clinical trials, and much more; she battled the disease with grace, determination, and strength for nearly 6 years; in the process, she inspired and impacted many; and

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WHEREAS, Elizabeth Weidner was crowned Junior Miss Effingham County Fair in 2017, and she wore the crown and represented Effingham County with pride, attending many pageants, events, parades, and festivals across the State; after winning, she created Crowns Fight Cancer to raise money and awareness in the fight against childhood cancer with the

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1 motto "Just a Girl Changing the World One Rhinestone at a  
2 Time"; along with the help of several clubs, schools,  
3 communities, and businesses, she started an amenity drive,  
4 which has collected over 80,000 items to date; she donated  
5 these items to Children's Miracle Network Hospitals and Ronald  
6 McDonald Houses in multiple states, helping families like hers  
7 by providing items they may be lacking during hospital stays,  
8 allowing families to focus on their children; and

9 WHEREAS, Elizabeth Weidner was involved in numerous  
10 activities, organizations, and clubs; she participated in  
11 modified pedal tractor pulls from a young age and competed in  
12 numerous competitions; she was the state champion in both  
13 Illinois and Indiana one year; she competed at nationals in  
14 Mitchell, South Dakota for many years, pulling at times in  
15 excess of 900 pounds; and

16 WHEREAS, Elizabeth Weidner was passionate about dancing  
17 and started taking lessons at Jansen's when she was 3 years  
18 old; she was a cheerleader for the Teutopolis Junior High  
19 School for 2 years; she became a Teutopolis High School  
20 Pomerette, fulfilling a childhood dream; she was named the  
21 Illinois High School Association Spirit of Sport winner in  
22 2021; and

23 WHEREAS, Elizabeth Weidner was also passionate about

1 theater and drama; she performed in numerous plays at the  
2 Effingham Performance Center, Teutopolis Junior High School,  
3 and Teutopolis High School; she performed in a lead role at the  
4 Teutopolis Terquasquicentennial Celebration in 2014; she  
5 placed Runner-Up in the Poetry Out Loud competition in  
6 Springfield in 2020, where she performed *Invictus*, *Triumph*  
7 *Like a Girl*, and *Siblings*; she was preparing for the fall's  
8 theater production at the time of her death; and

9 WHEREAS, Elizabeth Weidner was a member of the Country  
10 Cousins 4-H Club and other spin clubs; she was involved in  
11 public speaking through 4-H and won at the state level for many  
12 years; she also exhibited several general projects, which she  
13 won as well; she showed many different animals, including  
14 rabbits, chickens, dogs, cats, and pigs; she also competed in  
15 Master Showmanship; she enjoyed camping at the Effingham  
16 County Fair every year; she was named the 2021 National 4-H  
17 Youth in Action Pillar winner for civic engagement in 2020,  
18 and her work took the notice of fellow 4-H alum and  
19 humanitarian Dolly Parton; most recently, she showed pigs at  
20 the Duquoin State Fair and had the Reserve Grand Champion  
21 Duroc Gilt; and

22 WHEREAS, Elizabeth Weidner served as a chapter officer for  
23 the Teutopolis FFA chapter, where her roles included reporter  
24 and secretary; she volunteered at the Piglets on Parade

1 exhibit during the Illinois State Fair, educating the public  
2 about the swine industry; she was also an officer for Section  
3 20 for 2 years, where she served as sentinel and secretary; she  
4 won the Section 20 Creed Speak Contest; she was the state  
5 winner for her Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) in  
6 Service Learning in 2020; she received her State FFA Degree in  
7 2021, a distinction that only the top 3% of Illinois FFA  
8 members receive; she was working towards her American Degree,  
9 a distinction that only the top 1% of American FFA members  
10 receive; she wrote many grants to initiate the hydroponic  
11 program at Teutopolis High School (THS) and worked to secure  
12 funding for revamping the courtyards at THS; she was also  
13 working towards securing funding to build a greenhouse; her  
14 efforts elevated the FFA program for students and the  
15 community; and

16 WHEREAS, Elizabeth Weidner began advocating for those  
17 battling childhood cancer in 2017; she was a national  
18 spokesperson at several American Cancer Society (ACS) events  
19 and was responsible for bringing the ACS's Gold Together  
20 initiative to Illinois; she spoke, danced, and hosted at  
21 Curefest in Washington, D.C. many times and pleaded with  
22 Congressional leaders to increase funding for childhood cancer  
23 research and ultimately better treatments; she participated in  
24 several childhood cancer caucuses and Climb the Hill events on  
25 Capitol Hill; she was part of a groundbreaking meeting at the

1 University of Maryland, where the FDA, medical professionals,  
2 parents, and children met to discuss chemotherapy induced  
3 hearing loss; she worked on numerous projects with Kids v.  
4 Cancer and the American Childhood Cancer Organization; in the  
5 last few years, she filmed the award-winning The Promise: A  
6 Docuseries on Childhood Cancer and the mini-documentary  
7 Switching the Summit, and she had started working on a third  
8 film project in August; as an individual, she raised nearly  
9 \$70,000 for various cancer organizations; through various  
10 groups, she raised millions for research and family support  
11 programs; and

12 WHEREAS, Despite her hardships, Elizabeth Weidner embodied  
13 what it meant to lead with a servant's heart; she earned the  
14 distinction of the Governor's Volunteer Service Award and the  
15 national Prudential Community Spirit Award in 2019; she also  
16 highly encouraged organ and blood product donation and never  
17 shied away from giving food to the homeless; and

18 WHEREAS, Elizabeth Weidner was a kind, caring, loving,  
19 passionate, and graceful young woman who inspired many all  
20 over the world; she loved spending time with her brothers; she  
21 redefined what it meant to live with cancer and leaves behind a  
22 legacy that will live forever; and

23 WHEREAS, Elizabeth Weidner was preceded in death by a

1 sibling angel; her aunt, Kimberly L. McCabe; her cousins,  
2 Derek and Nathan Weidner; and her great-grandparents, Albert  
3 and Arvella (Alexander) McCabe, Marion and Sophia (Schwab)  
4 Gasparovich, Raymond and Bernadine (Ochs) Kuenstler, and Royal  
5 and Emma (Buerster) Weidner; and

6 WHEREAS, Elizabeth Weidner is survived by her parents; her  
7 brothers, Ethan (Madilyn Brummer), Eric, and Evan; her  
8 grandparents, Richard and Margaret (Kuenstler) Weidner; her  
9 many, many animals; and her many aunts, uncles, cousins,  
10 friends, pageant sisters, and supporters from afar; therefore,  
11 be it

12 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL  
13 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
14 Elizabeth Ann Weidner and extend our sincere condolences to  
15 her family, friends, and all who knew and loved her; and be it  
16 further

17 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
18 presented to the family of Elizabeth Weidner as an expression  
19 of our deepest sympathy.