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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 Timuel Dixon Black Jr. of Chicago, who passed away on October 13, 2021; and

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WHEREAS, Timuel Black was born to Mattie and Timuel Black in Birmingham, Alabama on December 7, 1918; his family moved to Chicago in August 1919; he grew up in Bronzeville during the first wave of the Great Migration; he attended Burke Elementary School; he graduated from DuSable High School in 1935; he served in the 308th Quartermaster Railhead Company of the U.S. Army during World War II, and he earned four Battle Stars and the French Croix de Guerre for his service; he married Norisea Cummings in 1946, and they had two children, Ermetra Black-Thomas and Timuel Kerrigan Black, before divorcing; he obtained his bachelor's degree in Sociology from Roosevelt University in 1952; he earned his master's degree in Sociology and History from the University of Chicago in 1954; he married his third wife Zenobia Johnson-Black in 1981; and

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WHEREAS, Timuel Black was a revered activist, educator, and historian; his first experience with labor organizing occurred when he and his coworkers sought better wages by forming a chapter of the Retail Clerks Union; he walked his first picket line in 1931; he helped establish the Congress of

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1 Racial Equality (CORE) in 1942 and the United Packinghouse
2 Workers of America (UPWA) in 1943; he was among a group from
3 Hyde Park's First Unitarian Church to invite Dr. Martin Luther
4 King Jr. to his first major Chicago speech at the Rockefeller
5 Memorial Chapel of the University of Chicago in 1956, where he
6 worked closely with Dr. King and became a trusted adviser
7 during the Civil Rights Movement; he helped organize the
8 Rainbow Beach "wade-ins" in 1960 that succeeded in integrating
9 that public beach a year later; he served as president of the
10 Chicago chapter of the Negro American Labor Council and
11 spearheaded Chicagoans' participation in the Southern
12 Christian Leadership Council's '63 March on Washington for
13 Jobs and Freedom, leading two "Freedom Trains" of 3,000
14 Chicagoans to D.C.; he was heavily involved in the Chicago
15 Freedom Movement; he was influential in the historic one-day
16 Chicago Public Schools boycott by approximately 250,000
17 students to call attention to segregation in Chicago schools
18 on October 22, 1963; and

19 WHEREAS, Timuel Black gained national attention for
20 coining the phrase "plantation politics" while confronting
21 Mayor Richard J. Daley's political machine when he
22 unsuccessfully ran for Fourth Ward alderman in 1963; he
23 co-chaired the People's Movement for Voter Registration and
24 Education in 1982, resulting in the registration of more than
25 250,000 voters to get Harold Washington to run against Jane

1 Byrne for Chicago mayor; he served as an adviser in the
2 campaigns of many of Chicago's Black elected officials,
3 including Carol Moseley Braun, who was elected as the first
4 African American woman to serve in the U.S. Senate in 1992; he
5 later served as counsel to then-Senator Barack Obama when he
6 ran for president in 2008, having become friends when Obama
7 was a young community organizer in the early 1980s; and

8 WHEREAS, Timuel Black worked as a social worker and a
9 history teacher at several high schools in Gary, Indiana and
10 Chicago, including DuSable, Farragut, and Hyde Park, where he
11 fought segregation and discrimination within the school
12 system; he helped establish the Teachers Committee for Quality
13 Education; he served as a professor of Sociology and
14 Anthropology at the City Colleges of Chicago, becoming dean of
15 Wright College in 1969; he was promoted to vice president of
16 Academic Affairs at Olive Harvey College in 1972; he served as
17 head of Communications system wide from 1973 to 1979; he then
18 taught Cultural Anthropology at Loop College until his
19 retirement in 1989; and

20 WHEREAS, Timuel Black became lead plaintiff in the ACLU's
21 Black vs. McGuffage lawsuit, which accused Illinois' voting
22 system of discriminating against minorities, in the wake of
23 the 2000 presidential election; his lawsuit led to the ban of
24 punch card ballots and a uniform voting system in Illinois;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, Timuel Black donated a collection of more than
3 250 boxes of personal photographs, correspondence,
4 manuscripts, speeches, audiovisuals, clippings, programs, and
5 other memorabilia to the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection
6 of Afro-American History and Literature at the Carter G.
7 Woodson Regional Library in Chicago; his collection was
8 unveiled as the Timuel D. Black Jr. Archive in 2012; and

9 WHEREAS, Timuel Black was a prolific author; he wrote two
10 seminal volumes of oral histories on the subject, which were
11 Bridges of Memory: Chicago's First Wave of Great Migration,
12 published in 2003, and Bridges of Memory: Chicago's Second
13 Generation of Black Migration, published in 2007; his memoir
14 Sacred Ground: The Chicago Streets of Timuel Black was
15 released on January 15, 2019; and

16 WHEREAS, Timuel Black remained active in progressive
17 politics and also conducted tours of Bronzeville for the
18 University of Chicago well into his late 90s; he joined the
19 Community Advisory Board led by the University, working to
20 bring the Barack Obama Presidential Library to Jackson Park;
21 he made the Chicago Sun-Times' list of the 200 most prominent
22 Illinoisans in the State's 200-year history in 2018; and

1 WHEREAS, Timuel Black left his mark on the City of
2 Chicago, on his friends who knew him, and on those who knew of
3 him; his legacy will inspire others to make this world a better
4 place just as he strove to do; therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL
6 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
7 Timuel Dixon Black Jr. and extend our sincere condolences to
8 his family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it
9 further

10 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
11 presented to the family of Timuel Black as an expression of our
12 deepest sympathy.