



HR0056

LRB103 30589 MST 57028 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Bertha Bell Cross, who passed away on January 19, 2023; and

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WHEREAS, Bertha Cross was born in Grenada, Mississippi to Irby and Matilda Willis on September 20, 1937; she received her formal education through Calhoun County Public Schools; she was baptized at Pleasant Grove M.B. Church; she relocated to Chicago, where she found a church home in New Joy Divine Full Gospel Church; she married Billy Ray Cross on January 12, 1962; later in life, she met James "Jack" Jamison, and the two were inseparable; and

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WHEREAS, Bertha Cross was employed in the housekeeping department at Michael Reese Hospital before venturing into entrepreneurship and launching a private homemaking business; and

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WHEREAS, Bertha Cross was affectionately known as "Ba Bell", "Bert", "Bertha Bell", "Bye Bye", "Momma B", "Ms. Bertha", and "Ms. Cross"; her proudest title was "Grandma" and "Nana" to her grandchildren; she encouraged them to pursue higher education and instilled in them a number of lifelong values, including a hard work ethic; and

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1 WHEREAS, Bertha Cross was truly a class act; she had a
2 presence that lit up every room, and she never met a stranger;
3 she had a passion for serving others and demonstrated this
4 through entertaining, hosting, and showcasing her southern
5 hospitality; she especially loved to cook and enjoyed
6 preparing delicious food for the soul, a skill she learned
7 from her grandmother, "Ma Bertha", after whom she was named;
8 she was also a sports fan, with her primary joy being baseball;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Bertha Cross was preceded in death by her
11 husband, Billy Ray Cross; her parents; her brothers, L.A.
12 Robinson and William "Tater" Willis; her sisters, Mildred T.
13 Willis, Benetta Starks, Hansome Conley, and Rebecca "Bec"
14 Willis; and her grandparents, Sam and Mary Golliday and
15 William and Bertha Willis; and

16 WHEREAS, Bertha Cross is survived by her partner of over
17 30 years, James "Jack" Jamison; her children, Michael "Mike"
18 Willis and Cassandra Cross; her stepchildren, Billy (Angela)
19 and Michael Hayes; her Goddaughter, Cherise "Reese" (Simeon)
20 Gillard El; her grandchildren, Tesheena "Sheena" (Darrell)
21 Horn and Jaylin D. McClinton; her Godgrandchildren, NeKaiya
22 Brandon El, Samara Brandon El, Joycelyn Brandon El, and Simeon
23 "Nugget" Brandon El II; her brother, Robert Willis; her

1 special co-worker, Claudia Vargas; two sisters-in-law; and
2 numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends; therefore, be
3 it

4 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
5 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
6 we mourn the passing of Bertha Bell Cross and extend our
7 sincere condolences to her family, friends, and all who knew
8 and loved her; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
10 presented to the family of Bertha Cross as an expression of our
11 deepest sympathy.