



HR0732

LRB103 37443 MST 67565 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 former
4 Illinois State Representative Susan Catania, who passed away
5 on November 27, 2023; and

6 WHEREAS, Rep. Catania was born in Chicago to John and
7 Helen (Giffrow) Kmetty on December 10, 1941; she attended
8 Mother McAuley High School and graduated from St. Xavier
9 College in 1962, where she earned a liberal arts degree with a
10 chemistry focus; she married Anthony Edward Catania in 1963,
11 and they had seven daughters; and

12 WHEREAS, Rep. Catania spent a year as a teaching assistant
13 at Northwestern University; she then went to work as an
14 information director at a chemical research company on
15 Chicago's Near South Side; and

16 WHEREAS, Rep. Catania's path to feminism and public
17 service began after learning that a younger and less
18 experienced male colleague was being paid twice her salary;
19 after several trips to Springfield to testify on relevant
20 legislation, she decided to seek elective office; and

21 WHEREAS, Rep. Catania's legislative service ran from 1973

1 to 1983; she represented a nearly all-Black district on
2 Chicago's Near South Side; she was a Republican in a city of
3 Democrats and a young mother at a time when very few women, and
4 even fewer who had children, ran for public office; and

5 WHEREAS, Rep. Catania championed the Equal Rights
6 Amendment, her signature issue; she also supported gay rights,
7 gun control, and access to abortion and was the first Illinois
8 legislator to sponsor the Freedom of Information Act; and

9 WHEREAS, Rep. Catania sponsored legislation that led
10 Illinois to a state holiday honoring Martin Luther King Jr.;
11 she helped revise the State's public aid code and provided
12 emergency state aid for Cook County and Provident hospitals;
13 in the case of Provident, the first Black-owned and operated
14 hospital in America, she joined with then-legislator and later
15 Chicago Mayor Harold Washington in co-sponsoring a bill that
16 saved it from shutting its doors permanently; in all, more
17 than 50 of her bills became law; and

18 WHEREAS, Rep. Catania served as a fellow at the Institute
19 of Politics at the Kennedy School at Harvard University upon
20 leaving office; in subsequent decades, she survived breast
21 cancer and bone cancer and went on to a second career, earning
22 a master's degree in social work from the University of
23 Chicago and working for the Illinois Department of Human

1 Services until her retirement; and

2 WHEREAS, Rep. Catania will be remembered as a feminist,
3 public servant, and matriarch who challenged political,
4 social, and gender norms and advocated for communities and
5 issues long ignored or shunned; and

6 WHEREAS, Rep. Catania was preceded in death by her parents
7 and her husband of 58 years, Anthony; and

8 WHEREAS, Rep. Catania is survived by her daughters, Susan
9 Wigsмоen and husband Dave Wigsмоen, Rachel Catania and husband
10 Levon Karayan, Sara Catania and husband Mark Nollinger,
11 Melissa Catania, Amy Catania and partner Benjamin Kent,
12 Annemarie Catania, and Margaret Catania and husband Wesley
13 Williams; her grandchildren, Andrew Wigsмоen, Alex Wigsмоen,
14 Sophia Karayan, Remy Karayan, Lincoln Karayan, Genevieve
15 Nollinger, Lucas Nollinger, Elijah Catania, Grey Catania,
16 Alice Catania, Francesca Catania, Inertia Catania, and Aviva
17 Catania; and numerous members of her extended Catania family;
18 therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
20 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
21 we mourn the passing of former Illinois State Representative
22 Susan Catania and extend our sincere condolences to her

1 family, friends and all who knew and loved her; and be it
2 further

3 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
4 presented to the family of Rep. Catania as an expression of our
5 deepest sympathy.