



SR0794

LRB103 39669 LAW 70058 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 Karen Ruth Boehning, who passed away on January 18, 2024; and

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WHEREAS, Karen Boehning was born on the north side of Chicago on September 6, 1945; during her teen years, she attended a boarding school in Glen Arbor, Michigan, where she played basketball, headed the women's athletics organization, participated in the student government, and spoke at graduation; and

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WHEREAS, Karen Boehning was a champion of women's rights, joining the Chicago chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1969; she proceeded to co-lead the Women's Strike for Equality in Chicago in 1970; the next year, she became president of the Chicago chapter of NOW and represented Illinois at the founding convention of the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) in Washington, D.C.; after co-founding the Chicago chapter of the NWPC, she established a program to empower women to run for political office; she also played a pivotal role in the campaign to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment in Illinois; later, as chair of the Chicago NOW's Media Action Committee, she worked tirelessly to challenge and change the stereotypical portrayals of women in media; and

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1           WHEREAS, In addition to her activism, Karen Boehning was a  
2           successful entrepreneur, founding Diversity Contract Services  
3           Inc. in 1986, a company dedicated to supporting women and  
4           minority-owned businesses; and

5           WHEREAS, Karen Boehning was active in numerous social  
6           justice and women's equality causes in her local community,  
7           and she served as the longtime president of Chicago's 46th  
8           Ward Democrats; she arranged voter registration and voter  
9           education drives as well as forums dedicated to promoting  
10          understanding of candidate views on women's issues; she  
11          organized a citywide celebration of the 90th anniversary of  
12          women gaining the right to vote in 2010; she also gathered one  
13          of the country's largest collections of historic artifacts  
14          related to the women's suffrage movement; and

15          WHEREAS, Karen Boehning dedicated her life to achieving  
16          just and worthy goals, and she was well-regarded by family,  
17          friends, and colleagues for her work ethic, generosity of  
18          spirit, and compassion; and

19          WHEREAS, Karen Boehning's legacy will live on in the  
20          thousands of women she mobilized toward civic engagement and  
21          leadership, in the countless Illinois residents of various  
22          backgrounds she inspired throughout her incredible life, and

1 through her oral history interviews with the Chicago Women's  
2 History Center, The VFA Pioneer Histories Project, and  
3 Columbia College Chicago HNR: The Problem With No Name,  
4 covering her life and contributions to the women's movement;  
5 therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL  
7 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
8 Karen Ruth Boehning and extend our sincere condolences to her  
9 family, friends, and all who knew and loved her; and be it  
10 further

11 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
12 presented to the family of Karen Boehning as an expression of  
13 our deepest sympathy.