



SR0866

LRB103 39975 ECR 71172 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, During Women's History Month, the members of the Illinois Senate wish to honor the life and contributions of former State Representative and State Senator Lottie Holman O'Neill, the first female state legislator of Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, On January 23, 1923, Senator O'Neill was escorted by more than 1,000 women to take the first seat ever held by a woman in the Illinois General Assembly, where she served as the lone female legislator for two years; and

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WHEREAS, The Illinois House of Representatives' gallery was packed with suffragists who, just two years earlier, had finally secured their right to vote, helping to make Illinois the first state in the nation to ratify the 19th amendment; and

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WHEREAS, Senator O'Neill's husband, William, led the crowd in cheers of "District 41, District 41, woman's work has just begun"; and

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WHEREAS, Senator O'Neill served 13 terms in the Illinois House of Representatives and three terms in the Illinois Senate; and

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WHEREAS, Senator O'Neill focused on legislation to improve

1 care for mothers and babies, to fund schools for disabled
2 children, and to secure better industrial conditions for
3 women, including an eight-hour workday; and

4 WHEREAS, Senator O'Neill introduced legislation year after
5 year to allow women to sit on juries which, thanks to her
6 perseverance, finally became law in Illinois in 1939; and

7 WHEREAS, Senator O'Neill was a proud resident of Downers
8 Grove Township, where she lived with her husband and two sons;
9 she was an activist for equal voting rights, served as
10 president of the Parent Teachers Association (PTA), and was a
11 leader in the Downers Grove League of Women Voters, the Red
12 Cross, the Campfire Girls, and the Downers Grove Women's Club;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Senator O'Neill retired from the Illinois General
15 Assembly at the age of 84 in 1963 as one of the State's most
16 notable Republican leaders; and

17 WHEREAS, Senator O'Neill's life and achievements are
18 commemorated with a statue of her likeness in the Illinois
19 State Capitol; and

20 WHEREAS, Senator O'Neill became the namesake of O'Neill
21 Middle School in Downers Grove, and its students continue to

1 proudly represent her as the O'Neill Senators; and

2 WHEREAS, Senator O'Neill is considered the great matriarch
3 of the Illinois Senate Republican Caucus, whose members today
4 strive to continue her work towards providing more
5 opportunities for all; therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL
7 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we honor the life,
8 legacy, and leadership of former State Representative and
9 State Senator Lottie Holman O'Neill; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
11 presented to the O'Neill Middle School as an expression of our
12 respect and esteem.