



1

SENATE RESOLUTION

2

WHEREAS, The members of the Senate of the State of Illinois learned with regret of the death of Elaine "Leah" Welbel of Skokie on Friday, January 2, 2004; and

3

4

5

WHEREAS, Elaine Mortkovitch was born in Vranoy, Czechoslovakia; her father was a construction worker and preceded her in death when she was eight; her mother was left with eight children to raise; and

6

7

8

9

WHEREAS, In 1942, Mrs. Welbel and the other Jewish girls in her town were sent by train to Auschwitz under the guise of being sent to work in a factory; she was given the identifying tattoo "4701" on her upper left forearm, a mark that years later she refused to have removed; and

10

11

12

13

14

WHEREAS, Mrs. Welbel endured an unusually long internment at Auschwitz, surviving for 33 months; when Auschwitz was liberated in 1945, she was sent to a displaced persons camp in Italy, where she met her future husband, Eliezer Welbel, who had survived 27 months in Auschwitz; they married in 1946 and the next year secretly moved to Palestine, where Mrs. Welbel's three oldest siblings had moved before the war; and

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

WHEREAS, Mr. and Mrs. Welbel emigrated to the United States after living eight years in Israel; they moved to Chicago in 1959, where they opened a coin laundry at 3352 North Marshfield Street; they retired in 1980; and

22

23

24

25

WHEREAS, Mrs. Welbel didn't speak publicly about her time in Auschwitz until 1993, after she read a story that tried to discount the history of the Holocaust; she was a sought-after public speaker with a tremendous connection with the students that she spoke to; she worked hard to make sure that the world will never forget the tragedy of the Holocaust; and

26

27

28

29

30

1           WHEREAS, The passing of Elaine "Leah" Welbel has been  
2 deeply felt by many, especially her husband, Eliezer; her sons,  
3 Michael and David; her five grandchildren; and her  
4 great-grandchild; therefore, be it

5           RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL  
6 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
7 Elaine "Leah" Welbel, a woman of outstanding vitality and  
8 heart, and a hero; and be it further

9           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
10 presented to the family of Mrs. Welbel as an expression of our  
11 deepest sympathy for their loss.