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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, State Representative Monique Davis and the members of the Illinois House of Representatives join with the entire nation in mourning the loss of civil rights leader, Rosa Parks; and

WHEREAS, Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her bus seat to a white man in 1955 triggered a 381-day boycott of the bus system in Montgomery, Alabama, organized by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., sparked the modern civil rights movement, changed the course of history, and earned her the title, "mother of the civil rights movement"; and

WHEREAS, Rosa Parks' simple act of defiance exposed the indecency of Jim Crow laws in the South that had been in place since the post-Civil War Reconstruction era and that required separation of the races in buses, restaurants, and public accommodations throughout the South and the pervasive, legally sanctioned racism that prevented African-Americans from obtaining jobs and housing in the North; the civil rights movement spawned by her actions ultimately resulted in the passage of comprehensive federal civil rights legislation that prohibits racial discrimination; and

WHEREAS, Rosa Parks continued throughout her life to work for the civil rights of all Americans; after taking her public stand for civil rights, Rosa Parks endured threats and harassment and had trouble finding work in Alabama; she moved with her husband, Raymond Parks, to Detroit, Michigan, where she continued her struggle to advance the cause of civil rights; she worked as an aide to U.S. Representative John Conyers for 23 years and became a revered figure in Detroit, where a street and a middle school bear her name; in 1995, she was among the civil rights leaders who addressed the Million Man March; and

1 WHEREAS, Upon her retirement from the office of Rep.
2 Conyers, she devoted her time and efforts to the Rosa and
3 Raymond Parks Institute for Self Development, which she founded
4 to develop leadership among Detroit's young people and initiate
5 them into the struggle for civil rights; and

6 WHEREAS, Rosa Parks' inspiring story has been the subject
7 of many published works, including, "Rosa Parks: My Story",
8 "Quiet Strength: The Faith, the Hope and the Heart of a Woman
9 Who Changed a Nation", and a collection of letters entitled,
10 "Dear Mrs. Parks: A Dialogue with Today's Youth"; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1996 Rosa Parks was awarded the Presidential
12 Medal of Freedom, awarded to civilians that have made
13 outstanding contributions to American life; in 1999, she was
14 awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest
15 civilian honor; and

16 WHEREAS, The passing of Rosa Parks does not extinguish her
17 legacy of peace, justice, equality, love, and fulfillment; she
18 encouraged us all to live with a vision of a better tomorrow
19 and with courage and inspiration to achieve the dream of
20 freedom and peace; therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
22 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
23 we express our profound sorrow at the death of Rosa Parks, that
24 we join with the rest of the nation and with freedom-loving
25 people everywhere in mourning the loss of this civil rights
26 champion, and that to her bereaved family and friends we extend
27 our heartfelt sympathy; and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
29 presented to the family of Rosa Parks.