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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, State Representative Monique D. Davis, together with the members of the House of Representatives of the State of Illinois, learned with sadness of the death of Lou Rawls, legendary gospel, jazz, and pop singer, formerly of Chicago, on Friday, January 6, 2006; and

WHEREAS, He was born on December 1, 1933, in Chicago and reared by his grandmother, Evelyn Beal; he began singing at the age of seven in his church choir at the Greater Mount Olive Baptist Church; his singing became known around town, and he sang in a group called the Teenage Kings of Harmony with his friend, Sam Cooke; and

WHEREAS, During the 1950s, he sang with such groups as the Holy Wonders, the Highway QC's, the Chosen Gospel Singers, and the Pilgrim Travelers; in 1955, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division, the All Americans; three years later, he left the service with the rank of Sergeant and rejoined the Pilgrim Travelers as a lead singer; and

WHEREAS, It was during a tour of the South with Sam Cooke and the Travelers that a serious car accident nearly ended Mr. Rawls' career and his life; one passenger was killed, Mr. Cooke was slightly injured, and Mr. Rawls was pronounced dead on the way to the hospital; although he slipped into a coma for nearly six days, suffered memory loss, and didn't recover completely for a year, Mr. Rawls survived; he often referred to that time as a turning point in his life, when he began to learn acceptance, direction, understanding, and perception; it gave him many reasons to live; and

WHEREAS, By the late 1950s, both Mr. Rawls and Mr. Cooke were leaning more toward secular music; Lou sang on a number of

1 Sam's records and in 1959, having recorded some singles of his
2 own for the Candix label, he was performing at Pandora's Box in
3 West Hollywood, when he was spotted by producer Nick Venet, who
4 soon signed him to Capitol Records; and

5 WHEREAS, In 1963, his Capitol debut was "I'd Rather Drink
6 Muddy Water", which became the first of more than 20 albums
7 recorded on that label within a decade; it was "Love Is a
8 Hurtin' Thing" in 1966 which sent him to the top; the album was
9 nominated for two Grammy awards, Best R&B Recording Artist and
10 Best R&B Vocal Performance; and

11 WHEREAS, In his performances during the 1960s, he became
12 famous for his monologues, called "pre-rap" by some, when he
13 would talk over music leading into and away from a song's
14 refrain; he won his first Grammy, Best R&B Vocal Performance,
15 for his song "Dead End Street", which used the pre-rap style;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, The 1970s began with Mr. Rawls winning a second
18 Grammy for "Natural Man", and he won the Downbeat magazine poll
19 for favorite male vocalist, beating perennial champion Frank
20 Sinatra; Mr. Rawls then signed with Philadelphia
21 International, the label run by producers and songwriters Kenny
22 Gamble and Leon Huff, and in 1976, the team made Mr. Rawls'
23 signature recording, "You'll Never Find (Another Love Like
24 Mine)", which sold a million copies as a single and reached
25 number one on the Billboard R&B charts; and

26 WHEREAS, That same year, he became a spokesman for
27 Anheuser-Busch; it was his voice heard intoning the slogan
28 "When you say Budweiser, you've said it all"; in 1980 he
29 started the Lou Rawls Parade of Stars Telethon, a yearly
30 television event that raised hundreds of millions of dollars
31 for the United Negro College Fund; "An Evening of Stars"
32 continues today, and through his tireless efforts he has helped

1 more than 65,000 students obtain higher education; and

2 WHEREAS, Mr. Rawls also acted, appearing in about 20 films,
3 including "Leaving Las Vegas" and "Blues Brothers 2000", and in
4 many television series; he lent his voice to children's
5 television shows, including "Garfield", "Hey Arnold!", and
6 "The Rugrats", and provided the voice of the grandfather on
7 Bill Cosby's animated series "Fatherhood"; and

8 WHEREAS, The passing of the great Lou Rawls has been deeply
9 felt by many, especially his wife, Nina; his children, Aiden,
10 Kendra, Lou Jr., and Louanna; and his grandchildren, Louis,
11 Chayiel, Jonathan, and Katrina; therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
13 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
14 we mourn the passing of Lou Rawls, legendary gospel, jazz, and
15 pop singer, and we extend our deepest sympathy to his family,
16 friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
18 presented to his family as an expression of our sincerest
19 condolences.