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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives were deeply saddened to learn of the death of former President Gerald R. Ford on December 26, 2006; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Ford was born in Omaha, Nebraska on July 14, 1913 and raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he joined the Boy Scouts and proudly attained the highest rank of Eagle Scout; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Ford attended the University of Michigan, where he played as a center and linebacker and helped the Wolverines win national titles in 1932 and 1933; following his graduation with a Bachelor's degree in economics, he turned down offers to play professional football and instead went to Yale, where he was hired as an assistant football coach and boxing coach; he later attended Yale Law School, where he received his law degree; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Ford set up a law practice in Michigan, but after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the United States Navy and served aboard an aircraft carrier in the Pacific Theater in World War II; he attained the rank of lieutenant commander and for his naval service he earned the Asian-Pacific Campaign Medal, the Philippine Liberation Medal, the American Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal; and

WHEREAS, On October 15, 1948 Gerald Ford married Betty Bloomer Warren, who would later serve as First Lady with distinction as a champion of women's rights; the couple raised four children, Michael, John, Steven, and Susan; and

WHEREAS, In 1948 Gerald Ford defeated an incumbent congressmen in his first political campaign and went on to

1 serve 13 terms, for a total of 25 years, as United States  
2 Representative for the Grand Rapids area; and

3 WHEREAS, As a congressman Gerald Ford was prominent on the  
4 Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and used his role on the  
5 House Appropriations Committee to curb spending; over time his  
6 personality and fair leadership helped him secure the House  
7 Minority Leadership position; in 1963 he was appointed to the  
8 Warren Commission, assigned to investigate the assassination  
9 of former President Kennedy; and

10 WHEREAS, In the wake of political turmoil and corruption,  
11 Gerald Ford rose to the position of Vice President, and then,  
12 following the resignation of President Richard Nixon, Gerald  
13 Ford was sworn in as the 38th President of the United States,  
14 becoming the only person to serve as both President and Vice  
15 President without being elected to those offices; and

16 WHEREAS, President Gerald Ford brought the nation together  
17 at a challenging time and restored confidence and trust in the  
18 White House; he will be long remembered as a leader that served  
19 with integrity, honesty, and strong patriotism; and

20 WHEREAS, Despite facing a strong Democrat-controlled  
21 Congress, President Gerald Ford set definitive goals to  
22 maintain a steady economy, scale back the national deficit, and  
23 reduce regulations and taxes on businesses; in his tenure he  
24 presided over the evacuation of Americans from Vietnam, worked  
25 to sustain foreign relations, and was the first President to  
26 visit Japan; and

27 WHEREAS, Following his presidency, Gerald Ford taught at  
28 the University of Michigan, established the Gerald Ford  
29 Institute on Public Policy, continued to represent the nation  
30 at ceremonial and historical events, served on a number of  
31 corporate boards, and devoted time to his love of golf; and

1           WHEREAS, On August 11, 1999, Gerald Ford was awarded the  
2 Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian  
3 award, for his many years of public service and his legacy of  
4 healing and hope as president; on May 21, 2001 he was presented  
5 the John F. Kennedy Profiles in Courage Award for placing the  
6 country's interests over his own political interests in his  
7 decision to pardon Richard Nixon; and

8           WHEREAS, On December 26, 2006, former President Gerald R.  
9 Ford passed away at his home in California at the age of 93;  
10 his family will remember him as a beloved husband, father,  
11 grandfather, and great-grandfather, and the world will  
12 remember him as a faithful and sincere public servant;  
13 therefore, be it

14           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
15 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
16 we mourn the loss of former President Gerald R. Ford, and we  
17 honor and celebrate his dedication and service to the People of  
18 the United States of America; and be it further

19           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
20 presented to the family of former President Ford and to the  
21 Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum in Grand Rapids,  
22 Michigan.