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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of John Szilage of Batavia, who passed away on March 29, 2009; and

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WHEREAS, He was born March 9, 1911 in Aurora, the second child of George and Mary Szilage; he grew up on Pigeon Hill, Aurora's east side, next to St. Michael's church; a child of The Great Depression, he and his family were among Aurora's most industrious early citizens; in 1934, he married his high school sweetheart, Marian; and

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WHEREAS, During the 1930s John worked as a soda jerk at the Elite Confectionary on South Broadway, "Where no sodas on Sunday gave birth to Sundaes"; he also sold hot dogs at the North Aurora Fair Grounds; during World War II, John worked as a tool maker at the Buick Aviation Plant, Lyon Metal Products, and Haberle Engineering; after the war, John and two of his five brothers became founding partners of the General Tool Manufacturing Company and later, Ballco Manufacturing in Aurora, of which he was president; and

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WHEREAS, His companies produced precision quality metal ball valves for numerous applications, including security for the United States government on the Polaris missile, a

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1 submarine-launched, two-stage solid-fuel nuclear-armed
2 ballistic missile built by Lockheed; Ballco also made the first
3 prototype for a hip bone replacement in the late 1960s; the
4 three brothers were business partners for 40 years; Ballco
5 Manufacturing was sold in the mid-80s; he owned and expanded
6 the Lincoln Inn on Lake Street, Route 31; he and his wife owned
7 the estate at 495 North Lake Street, known as Plum Landing, as
8 a personal residence from 1951 to 1961 before it was
9 transformed into a retirement community; and he also owned and
10 raised winning harness horses that raced at Sportsman's Park
11 and across the country; his most famous stallion, "Tricky Dick
12 N", was a nationally well-known trotter so powerful and
13 consistent a winner that ultimately John retired him because he
14 could not find any other horses willing to race against the
15 steed; and

16 WHEREAS, He was active in the State and national Republican
17 Party as a major fundraiser and donor, and he and his wife
18 attended the inaugurals for President Ronald Reagan and
19 Illinois Governor Jim Thompson; he was a member of the Elks
20 Club and Moose Lodge in North Aurora, The Anvil Club in East
21 Dundee, and The Erickson Club in Elgin; he loved to travel and
22 he and his wife dined with Prince Rainier and Princess Grace of
23 Monaco, traveled extensively throughout Europe, and cruised in
24 Alaska; his favorite stop was Las Vegas, where he was
25 well-known and counted hotelier Steve Wynn as a friend; and

1 WHEREAS, He knew Walter Payton, former Republican House
2 Speaker Dennis Hastert, Kane County Clerk Jack Cunningham, and
3 a host of local civic leaders past and present; he was a
4 community leader, advisor, coach, and philosopher; he loved
5 fine food, wine, music, dancing, deep sea fishing, gaming, and
6 horse racing; and

7 WHEREAS, John Szilage was preceded in death by his wife of
8 74 years, Marian (nee Garman); his brothers, George, Louis, and
9 Steve Szilage; his sister, Mary Fox, nee Szilage; his parents,
10 George and Mary (nee Borlan) Szilage; his son-in-law, John
11 Sipple; and many loving friends and colleagues; and

12 WHEREAS, He is survived by his daughter, Marian Jeannie
13 Sipple Love (nee Szilage); his granddaughters, Heather M. Love
14 Wroblewski (nee Sipple) and Kathy Henry (nee Love); his
15 grandsons, Rick and Mark Love; his great-grandchildren, Morgan
16 Wroblewski, Danica and Jim Henry, Taylor Love, and Josh Love;
17 his youngest brother, Tom Szilage; his nieces and nephews,
18 George, John and Tom Szilage, Sherry Szilage Stoffel, Pam
19 Szilage Moser, Billie Diane Fox Mills, Mary Candace Fox Evans,
20 Steve Szilage, Sally Szilage Cleveland, Sharon Szilage, Jeff
21 Szilage, and Debbie Szilage Herdrich; and his special niece,
22 Joni Szilage Roscoe; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL
2 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
3 his family and friends, the passing of John Szilage; and be it
4 further

5 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
6 presented to the family of John Szilage as a symbol of our
7 sincere sympathy.