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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Senator Frank Watson served the people of Illinois, especially the citizens of Bond, Clinton, Effingham, Fayette, Macon, Madison, Marion, Moultrie, Shelby, and St. Clair counties, with distinction for 30 years, serving in the Illinois House of Representatives and Illinois Senate from 1979 to 2009; and

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WHEREAS, Senator Watson served honorably as Leader of the Senate Republican Caucus from December of 2002 to December of 2008, and was an Assistant Senate Majority Leader from 1993 to 2002, and a member of a number of important Senate committees such as Agriculture and Conservation, Appropriations, Education, Executive, and Transportation; and

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WHEREAS, Senator Watson's legislative career was marked by historic accomplishments, including welfare reform to provide opportunities for self-reliance by helping people move from the welfare rolls to the employment rolls, a program that became a model program for the nation; and

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WHEREAS, Senator Watson championed economic development issues that helped make Illinois more competitive with its neighboring states through the Economic Development for a Growing Economy or "EDGE" Program, which provided incentives

1 for new jobs and business expansion; and

2 WHEREAS, Senator Watson also led the fight to clean up  
3 polluted former industrial sites to help make them a suitable  
4 home for new industry and jobs; and

5 WHEREAS, Public education was one of Senator Watson's most  
6 important concerns, which led him to sponsor landmark Chicago  
7 school reform, to make education funding a budget priority, and  
8 to sponsor the College Illinois! and Bright Start college  
9 tuition programs to make higher education more affordable; and

10 WHEREAS, Senator Watson, a long-time pharmacist and owner  
11 of his family's century-old Watson's Drug Store in downtown  
12 Greenville, took a deep interest in the issue of access to  
13 quality health care; and

14 WHEREAS, He sponsored a number of new laws during his  
15 career to improve rural health care, including HMO reform, a  
16 Patient's Bill of Rights, the expansion of prenatal testing,  
17 new health care options to improve access in  
18 medically-underserved areas, and a ground-breaking effort that  
19 led to medical malpractice insurance reform that helped turn  
20 the tide of the doctors leaving Illinois; and

21 WHEREAS, Senator Watson was a tireless supporter of

1 Illinois coal throughout his tenure in the Legislature,  
2 sponsoring and supporting legislation that helped coal  
3 companies keep operating during the difficult 1980s and 1990s;  
4 and supporting industry incentives to encourage more energy  
5 generating capacity; and

6 WHEREAS, He was a strong supporter of the FutureGen project  
7 and helped pave the way for the Tenaska Energy Park, which will  
8 use the rich coal reserves in southern Illinois; and

9 WHEREAS, Senator Watson fought hard for transportation  
10 funding as important to economic development and job creation  
11 throughout the State, but especially in southern Illinois,  
12 including making U.S. Route 51 a top priority; and

13 WHEREAS, Senator Watson was a defender of local government,  
14 raising the issue of unfunded mandates and helping to initiate  
15 a change in how State government conducts business; and

16 WHEREAS, Thanks to Senator Watson's leadership, mandates  
17 cannot be passed along to cities, counties, or other local  
18 units of government without proper funding from the State; and

19 WHEREAS, Senator Watson's tireless work on behalf of the  
20 citizens of Illinois also included his work on numerous boards  
21 and commissions, which dealt with the fundamental issues of the

1 day; and

2 WHEREAS, Senator Watson has received numerous awards for  
3 his legislative work over the years from local, regional,  
4 State, and national organizations, from such diverse interests  
5 as veterans, economic development, health care, local  
6 government, seniors, and education; and

7 WHEREAS, Senator Watson is a life-long resident and  
8 favorite son of Greenville, and graduated from Purdue  
9 University with a bachelor's degree in Pharmacy in 1968; and

10 WHEREAS, Senator Watson became very involved in his  
11 community beginning his public service career as Bond County  
12 Central Township Trustee and Supervisor, as a member of the  
13 Greenville Zoning Board of Appeals; and as a member of, and  
14 later President of, the Greenville Jaycees during 1973 and  
15 1974, when he was selected as the Outstanding Jaycee in  
16 Illinois and one of five Outstanding Jaycees in the nation; and

17 WHEREAS, He was inducted into the Illinois Jaycee Hall of  
18 Fame in 1999; and

19 WHEREAS, With his retirement, Senator Frank Watson can now  
20 spend more time with his family; wife, Susan; daughter, Kami  
21 and son-in-law, Rod; son, Chad; daughter-in-law, Erin; and

1 grandson, Brennan; and

2 WHEREAS, Senator Frank Watson's passion for his fellow  
3 citizens of Illinois was so heart-felt that from time to time  
4 it showed deeply upon his face and in his voice filled with  
5 emotion; therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL  
7 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we thank Senator Frank  
8 Watson for his remarkable service to the State of Illinois and  
9 its 12 million citizens and that we honor him with this  
10 resolution; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this preamble and  
12 resolution be presented to Frank Watson with our best wishes,  
13 our abiding friendship, and our deep appreciation.