



HR1036

LRB098 21022 GRL 58718 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, State Representative Monique D. Davis and the
3 members of the Illinois House of Representatives are saddened
4 to learn of the death of Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, who passed
5 away on April 20, 2014; and

6 WHEREAS, Rubin Carter was born on May 6, 1937 into a family
7 of seven children; he struggled with a hereditary speech
8 impediment and was sent to a juvenile reform center at the age
9 of 12 after an assault; he later escaped and joined the United
10 States Army in 1954; he learned to box while serving in the
11 Army in West Germany; and

12 WHEREAS, After returning home from the Army, Rubin Carter
13 committed a series of muggings and spent 4 years in various
14 state prisons; after his release, he began his pro boxing
15 career, winning 20 of his first 24 fights mostly by knockout;
16 he was well known in the boxing world as a 160-pound contender
17 who earned his nickname of "Hurricane" through his ferocity and
18 punching power; he went 27-12-1 with 19 knockouts, memorably
19 stopping two-division champ Emile Griffith in the first round
20 in 1963; he also fought for a middleweight title in 1964,
21 losing a unanimous decision to Joey Giardello; he boxed
22 regularly on television at Madison Square Garden and overseas
23 in London, Paris, and Johannesburg; and

1 WHEREAS, Rubin Carter's boxing career came to an abrupt end
2 when he was imprisoned for 3 murders committed at a tavern in
3 Paterson, New Jersey in 1966; Carter and his friend John Artis
4 had been driving around Carter's hometown on the night that 3
5 white people were shot by 2 black men at the Lafayette Bar and
6 Grill; they were convicted in 1967 by an all-white jury,
7 largely on the testimony of 2 thieves who later recanted their
8 stories; he was granted a new trial and briefly freed in 1976,
9 but he was sent back for 9 more years after being convicted in
10 a second trial; many celebrities, including Muhammad Ali and
11 Coretta Scott King, spoke out on Carter's behalf and worked
12 toward his release, joined by a network of friends and
13 volunteers; he was then freed in 1985, when his convictions
14 were finally thrown out after years of appeals; at his final
15 trial, United States District Judge H. Lee Sarokin wrote that
16 the boxer's prosecution had been "predicated upon an appeal to
17 racism rather than reason, and concealment rather than
18 disclosure"; and

19 WHEREAS, Following his tragic ordeal, Rubin Carter became a
20 prominent public advocate for the wrongfully convicted from his
21 new home in Canada, where he served as the executive director
22 of the Association in Defence of the Wrongly Convicted from
23 1993 to 2005; he also received 2 honorary doctorates for his
24 work; and

1 WHEREAS, Rubin Carter's ordeal and its racial overtones
2 were publicized in Bob Dylan's 1975 song "Hurricane", several
3 books, and a 1999 film starring Denzel Washington; he also
4 wrote and spoke eloquently about his plight, publishing his
5 autobiography, "The Sixteenth Round"; and

6 WHEREAS, Rubin Carter will be fondly remembered by his
7 supporters and his loved ones for his unbreakable spirit, his
8 endless enthusiasm for life, and his great willingness to fight
9 against injustice with all his might; therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
11 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
12 we, along with his family and friends, mourn the passing of
13 Rubin "Hurricane" Carter; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
15 presented to the family of Rubin Carter as an expression of our
16 sympathy.