



HR1558

LRB099 24351 MST 52155 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives have learned with deep sorrow of the death of
4 our friend and former colleague, State Representative Irvin
5 Ronald Lawfer of Jo Daviess County, who passed away on December
6 18, 2016; and

7 WHEREAS, A native of Illinois, Representative Lawfer was
8 born on May 15, 1934, in Kent; he attended grade school at
9 Wards Grove School and graduated from Stockton High School in
10 1951; he majored in agriculture and journalism at the
11 University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where he worked as a
12 reporter, covering stories for the "Daily Illini" and the
13 "Champaign News-Gazette"; as a young man with deep ties to
14 agriculture, he pledged at the FarmHouse Fraternity, and
15 presided over the house in his senior year; and

16 WHEREAS, Upon his graduation from the University of
17 Illinois in 1955, Representative Lawfer married Patricia A.
18 "Pat" Renken, who was his wife partner in life for 61 years;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, In 1955, at the height of the Cold War,
21 Representative Lawfer joined the United States Army; he was
22 commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and served on the front

1 lines of the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ); he brought new
2 Illinois findings in the reduction of soil erosion to the
3 attention of his superior officers and was seconded to the
4 Engineering Division of the Eighth Division, working on soil
5 erosion reduction projects at U.S. installations throughout
6 the peninsula and earning the Army Commendation Ribbon for his
7 service; and

8 WHEREAS, Upon completing his term of enlistment as a First
9 Lieutenant in 1957, Representative Lawfer returned to
10 northwest Illinois and took up dairy farming in his home
11 township; as a member of the Midwest Dairymen Cooperative, he
12 was named Outstanding Dairyman of Jo Daviess County; he served
13 as Director and Vice-President of the Jo Daviess County Farm
14 Bureau, and was appointed as Chairman of the Jo Daviess County
15 Agricultural Extension Council; known as a man who was both an
16 operating farmer and an expert in land conservation, he won
17 many recognitions for his expertise, including the 1986 "Master
18 Farmer" Award from "Prairie Farmer" Magazine; he served on the
19 Illinois Agricultural and Stabilization Committee as an
20 appointee of United States Secretary of Agriculture, Earl Butz;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, As a leading local farmer and community leader,
23 Representative Lawfer was chosen by his neighbors for public
24 service; he was elected as Wards Grove Township Supervisor from

1 1974 to 1982 and served on the Jo Daviess County Board from
2 1982 until 1992; in November of 1992, he ran to represent the
3 74th Representative District in the Illinois General Assembly,
4 winning by a narrow margin of 860 votes; so popular was his
5 first term service that in November of 1994, when he first ran
6 for re-election, he faced no opposition; and

7 WHEREAS, Representative Lawfer served the 74th
8 Representative District, which comprised all of Jo Daviess and
9 Stephenson Counties, and parts of Carroll, Ogle, and Whiteside
10 Counties; as an Illinois House member with experience in
11 farming, land conservation, and local government, he served as
12 minority spokesman on the House Committee on Agriculture &
13 Conservation; he also served on Counties & Townships,
14 Environment & Energy, and many other committees; in the 89th
15 General Assembly, he chaired the House Committee on Aging; and

16 WHEREAS, When Representative Lawfer retired from the
17 Illinois House of Representatives at the close of the 92nd
18 General Assembly, the House recognized his service by adopting
19 House Resolution 1127 in his honor; during his retirement, he
20 planned on concentrating on farming and spending time with his
21 family; and

22 WHEREAS, From the end of 2002 until the end of 2016,
23 Representative Lawfer fulfilled those life plans, handing his

1 farming heritage on to his family; and

2 WHEREAS, Representative Lawfer was a lifelong member of the
3 Lutheran Church; he was baptized at St. John Lutheran Church in
4 Massbach and confirmed at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Kent; he
5 was a member of Christ Lutheran Church in Stockton, where he
6 served as member and Chairman of the church council; and

7 WHEREAS, Representative Lawfer and his wife had four
8 daughters, Kathy, Karen, Kay, and Kristine, and a son, Ronald
9 L.; they have nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, The death of Representative Lawfer is deeply felt
12 by his family, friends, neighbors and all who knew him; he was
13 one of the men of Illinois who leaves an empty space behind him
14 when he goes; therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
16 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
17 we, along with his family and friends, mourn the passing of
18 former State Representative Irvin Ronald Lawfer; and be it
19 further

20 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
21 presented to Representative Lawfer's widow, Patricia Lawfer,

1 and their family as an expression of our deepest sympathy and
2 respect.