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1

SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate were saddened
3 to learn of the unexpected death of our friend and former
4 colleague, Judy Baar Topinka, who passed away on December 10,
5 2014; and

6 WHEREAS, Judy Baar Topinka was born to immigrant parents
7 Lillian Mary Shuss and William D. Baar on January 16, 1944 in
8 Riverside; after attending public schools throughout the Cold
9 War and the Golden Age of Capitalism, she graduated from
10 Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism in 1966,
11 where she was a member of the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority; and

12 WHEREAS, Judy Baar Topinka dedicated herself to a lifetime
13 of service to the people of the State of Illinois; after
14 graduating from Northwestern University, she began a career in
15 journalism as a part-time reporter for the Berwyn, Cicero, and
16 Stickney-Forest View Life Newspapers, before being hired
17 full-time in 1971; in her award-winning journalism career, she
18 was a reporter, education editor, feature writer, feature
19 editor, and photographer; she received honors from the Illinois
20 Women's Press Association, the Illinois Press Association, and
21 the Illinois State Medical Society for her work covering
22 advances in the medical field; and

1 WHEREAS, Judy Baar Topinka's time covering politics and
2 local issues as a journalist is what ultimately motivated her
3 move into politics; in 1980, she was elected to serve in the
4 Illinois House of Representatives; she served 2 successful
5 terms before being elected to the Senate in 1984, where she
6 served for 10 years until 1995; and

7 WHEREAS, Judy Baar Topinka brought her larger-than-life
8 personality to the Senate and quickly became known as a hard
9 worker and one of the most outspoken members of the body; and

10 WHEREAS, During Judy Baar Topinka's tenure, she was a
11 resolute advocate for the health and welfare of the general
12 public, passing a diverse array of legislation ranging from
13 requiring employees at a physical fitness center to be
14 certified in CPR to defining ethical standards for physicians
15 to better protect citizens from medical malpractice; and

16 WHEREAS, Judy Baar Topinka was an ardent defender of
17 numerous human rights issues, including the Equal Rights
18 Amendment, gender and marriage equality, and abortion rights;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, Judy Baar Topinka engineered successful efforts
21 in health care delivery and medical ethics and soon became one
22 of the State's most respected legislators in the field; her

1 knowledge and ability led her colleagues to name her as
2 chairperson of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee in 1992;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, In 1994, Judy Baar Topinka achieved the
5 distinction of being the first woman elected to serve as State
6 Treasurer, becoming only the second woman in Illinois history
7 to hold a State constitutional executive office; and

8 WHEREAS, During Judy Baar Topinka's 3 terms as State
9 Treasurer, her frugal nature was evident through her strong
10 advocacy for financial prudence; and

11 WHEREAS, Judy Baar Topinka knew that good fiscal habits and
12 skills are developed at a young age, which is why she created
13 Illinois' Bank at School, a program to teach schoolchildren the
14 value of saving money; the State earned record amounts of
15 income on investments during her tenure as Treasurer; she also
16 helped thousands of families save for college by creating one
17 of the most affordable college savings programs in the nation;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, Judy Baar Topinka's office helped create and
20 retain more than 13,000 new jobs through an innovative linked
21 deposits program, and developed the nation's largest
22 agriculture loan program for farmers; and

1 WHEREAS, In 2006, Judy Baar Topinka ran for Governor of
2 Illinois, becoming only the second woman to win a major party's
3 nomination for Governor in the State; and

4 WHEREAS, In 2010, Judy Baar Topinka was elected to serve as
5 the Illinois State Comptroller, making her the first woman to
6 serve in 2 State constitutional offices in Illinois; she served
7 as the State's chief financial officer with integrity and
8 dedication, continuing her advocacy for fiscal responsibility
9 and greater accountability during a time of severe financial
10 constraints in the State; and

11 WHEREAS, Judy Baar Topinka is survived by her son, Joseph;
12 her daughter-in-law, Christina; and her granddaughter,
13 Alexandra; and

14 WHEREAS, Judy Baar Topinka was a trailblazer; her legacy of
15 dedication to community, honest governance, and great dignity
16 will be dearly missed by the members of this body, the people
17 of the State of Illinois, and her friends and admirers
18 throughout the nation; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL
20 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
21 her family and friends, the passing of our friend and

1 colleague, Judy Baar Topinka; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
3 presented to the family of Judy Baar Topinka as an expression
4 of our sympathy and our great respect for Judy Baar Topinka's
5 life and legacy.