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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 Brian Sleet of Chicago, who passed away on December 26, 2018 at the age of 41; and

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WHEREAS, Brian Sleet was born and raised in Chicago's Chatham neighborhood and was committed to his community and to public service; he graduated from Whitney Young High School in 1996; he earned a degree in Sociology from Dartmouth College in 2000; in 2005, he earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, Brian Sleet returned to Chatham after college and spent time teaching at a neighborhood elementary school; he began his political career at the U.S. Census Bureau and as a staffer for former Representative Jesse Jackson Jr.; he also practiced independently as an attorney, mainly on family law cases; in 2011, he ran for alderman in the 6th Ward; during that race, he developed a friendship with Alderman Roderick Sawyer, who started as his competitor but evolved into a close ally; he joined Sawyer's campaign during the runoff, and, after Sawyer won the post, he was appointed chief of staff; in 2015, he helped get Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx elected; recently, he worked as a senior adviser with the communications strategy firm, Kivvit, where he was a spokesman for the Obama

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1 Foundation as it sought City Council approval for the planned
2 presidential library in Jackson Park; earlier this year, he
3 also started his own consulting agency and worked to help
4 connect corporate clients with grass-roots leaders; and

5 WHEREAS, Brian Sleet's pride and joy was serving on the
6 board of Chicago Votes; outside his City Hall work, he enjoyed
7 long conversations over a glass of bourbon and a fine cigar;
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9 WHEREAS, Brian Sleet was committed to improving the quality
10 of life for people on the South Side and across the City of
11 Chicago and to training young black organizers and political
12 operatives; he was known as a forthright, well-connected
13 strategist who would toil relentlessly to help candidates
14 connect with marginalized communities in new and innovative
15 ways; his keen political mind, speechwriting savvy, and mastery
16 of social media meant anybody running for elected office wanted
17 his advice; news of his death led to an outpouring of
18 condolences from elected leaders, community activists, and
19 neighbors, prompting the creation and prominence of the
20 #SleetisChicago hashtag; and

21 WHEREAS, Brian Sleet is survived by his fiancée, Nathalie
22 Essex; his parents; his brother; and his large extended family;
23 therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL
2 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
3 Brian Sleet and extend our sincere condolences to his family,
4 friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
6 presented to the family of Brian Sleet as an expression of our
7 deepest sympathy.