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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives wish to mark Black History Month by congratulating Illinois House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch for his continued service as the leader of the chamber and for his historic election as the first Black lawmaker to hold this position in the state's 200-plus-year history; and

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WHEREAS, Speaker Welch was re-elected as Speaker of the House in both 2023 and 2025, continuing his leadership in shaping Illinois' legislative agenda; and

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WHEREAS, Speaker Welch has been an advocate for diversity and inclusion; he championed legislation requiring Illinois-based corporations to disclose the racial and gender composition of their boards and led a comprehensive study on improving representation of women and minorities in leadership roles; and

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WHEREAS, Speaker Welch's commitment to workers' rights is deeply personal; growing up in the Chicago suburbs, he saw firsthand how his father's union job was lost when it moved to a right-to-work state; this experience fueled his efforts as an elected official to defend collective bargaining rights, ultimately leading to the adoption of the Workers' Rights

1 Amendment in the Illinois State Constitution; and

2 WHEREAS, Education has also been a key priority for
3 Speaker Welch; before serving in the legislature, he spent 12
4 years on the Proviso Township High School Board of Education,
5 including a decade as board chair; under his leadership, the
6 district established the Proviso Math and Science Academy,
7 which is now one of Illinois' top selective enrollment public
8 schools serving communities of color and has been recognized
9 by U.S. News & World Report for its excellence; and

10 WHEREAS, Speaker Welch continues to lead with a vision of
11 expanding opportunity, strengthening workers' rights, and
12 fostering a more inclusive and equitable Illinois; therefore,
13 be it

14 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
15 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
16 we celebrate the chapter of Black History written here in this
17 House by recognizing the historic speakership of Emanuel
18 "Chris" Welch; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
20 presented to Speaker Welch as a symbol of our esteem and
21 respect.