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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The Illinois General Assembly recognizes the importance of Route 66 as a cultural and historical asset and wishes to honor its centennial milestone and to celebrate its impact on transportation, tourism, and the American spirit; and

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WHEREAS, Route 66, known as the "Main Street of America" or as the "Mother Road", has played a significant role in the history and development of the United States, connecting Chicago, Illinois, to Santa Monica, California and serving as a vital transportation corridor since its establishment in 1926; and

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WHEREAS, The year 2026 marks the 100th anniversary of Route 66, a roadway that has become an enduring symbol of adventure, freedom, and economic opportunity and that has contributed to the culture and identity of Illinois and the nation as a whole; and

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WHEREAS, Illinois holds a unique place in the history of Route 66 as it was the first state to pave the highway in its entirety and serves as the starting point of this legendary route in downtown Chicago; Route 66 passes through numerous communities and landscapes that have left a lasting imprint on

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1 American history; and

2 WHEREAS, Route 66 in Illinois has supported small
3 businesses, diners, motels, and roadside attractions,
4 fostering economic growth and tourism while preserving the
5 rich history of the communities along its path from Chicago to
6 the Mississippi River; and

7 WHEREAS, During the Prohibition era, Route 66 was often
8 used as a corridor for transporting illicit goods, and during
9 the Great Depression, it became a critical path for displaced
10 families seeking new opportunities in the West; and

11 WHEREAS, Route 66 has been immortalized in American
12 culture through various works of art, including literature,
13 film, and music such as John Steinbeck's novel "The Grapes of
14 Wrath", the popular song "(Get Your Kicks on) Route 66", and
15 numerous Hollywood films that have celebrated its legacy; and

16 WHEREAS, The preservation and commemoration of Route 66's
17 legacy have been championed by local organizations,
18 historians, and enthusiasts who continue to promote awareness
19 and appreciation of its historical significance; therefore, be
20 it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL

1 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF
2 REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING HEREIN, that we declare 2026 as the
3 Illinois Route 66 Centennial Year in the State of Illinois;
4 and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That we encourage communities, historical
6 societies, and state agencies to organize commemorative events
7 and educational initiatives to honor this historic occasion.