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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 former Illinois State Rep. Ronald A. "Ron" Wait, who passed away on December 30, 2024; and

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WHEREAS, Rep. Wait, a native of Boone County, was born in Belvidere on April 15, 1944, the son of Grace Smith Wait and Cecil Wait; he grew up in Belvidere, where his father was the manager of Wait Farms; the future lawmaker was a member of one of the Illinois farm families that was helping to feed the world during the hungry time of World War II and the years of postwar austerity; and

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WHEREAS, Rep. Wait earned a college degree at Drake University, majoring in accounting; returning to Boone County with a car, he drove tirelessly to Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, where he earned a Master of Science in Education and a Master of Business Administration; and

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WHEREAS, Rep. Wait was a teacher and sports enthusiast and served for four years as a track coach and basketball coach at Belvidere High School; and

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WHEREAS, Rep. Wait resumed his ties with Drake University, earning admission to their law school and earning a Juris

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1 Doctor; and

2 WHEREAS, Rep. Wait was also co-managing and managing his
3 family's Boone County farm throughout this period as a
4 student, accountant, teacher, and lawyer; and

5 WHEREAS, Rep. Wait's home in Boone County was drawn into
6 the new Illinois House 64th Representative District in 1982 as
7 the result of redistricting after the 1980 census and the
8 creation of the new system of single-member districts; the new
9 district was physically centered on Boone County, with large
10 slices of McHenry and Winnebago County; and

11 WHEREAS, Rep. Wait's neighbors nominated him in the March
12 1982 primary election as the Republican candidate for the
13 November 1982 general election; the new district was staunchly
14 Republican, and he was elected by a margin of more than 8,000
15 votes; and

16 WHEREAS, Rep. Wait, with his farm background, was quickly
17 appointed to what was then the House Agriculture Committee,
18 and in only his second term, in 1985-86 (84th General
19 Assembly), he became the House Republican spokesperson on the
20 committee; and

21 WHEREAS, Rep. Wait was the Republican spokesperson for

1 Illinois farmers and their work for eight years until 1993;
2 during this time, he was joined in life by his beloved wife,
3 Jody Wait, and her son, Danny Phillips; and

4 WHEREAS, Rep. Wait briefly left office after the November
5 1992 election but remained in politics; he challenged the
6 brief Democratic office-holder from what had become the 68th
7 Representative District, Rep. Barbara Giolitto, to a rematch
8 in November 1994, defeated her, and was elected to the 89th
9 General Assembly; and

10 WHEREAS, Rep. Wait became a committee chairperson with the
11 Republican majority of the 89th General Assembly; he became
12 chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Motor
13 Vehicles; in January 1997, he became the minority spokesperson
14 of the same Committee, a post he would retain for 12 years; and

15 WHEREAS, Rep. Wait chose to move on from the Illinois
16 House of Representatives in spring 2010; although his friends
17 put in his name for a judgeship on the 17th Circuit Court of
18 Illinois, the voters selected another candidate, and he opted
19 to end his career in active politics; and

20 WHEREAS, Rep. Wait won renewed praise from his neighbors
21 for his continuing active participation in the local and
22 community affairs of Belvidere after returning to private life

1 in Boone County in spring 2011; these issues grew more
2 challenging in the 2010s in conjunction with the overall
3 economic status of Illinois as a place to invest and create
4 jobs; and

5 WHEREAS, Rep. Wait served in a number of leadership
6 positions, including with the Highland Hospital, the Boone
7 County Board, the Boone County Housing Authority Board, the
8 University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Board, and the
9 Boone County Farm Bureau; and

10 WHEREAS, Rep. Wait was active with a number of community
11 organizations, including the First United Methodist Church of
12 Belvidere, the United Way, Rosecrance, the Boone County Bar
13 Association, the Cosmopolitan Club of Belvidere, the Grange,
14 the Moose Club, the Belvidere YMCA, and the Belvidere Area
15 Chamber of Commerce; in addition, he was instrumental in
16 finding funding for the Belvidere Community Building Project;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, Rep. Wait was honored in October 2024 by the
19 Belvidere Chamber of Commerce with the honorary status of a
20 Doctor of Civic Betterment in homage to his life of service to
21 Boone County and its people; therefore, be it

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

1 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
2 former Illinois State Rep. Ronald A. "Ron" Wait and extend our
3 sincere condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew
4 and loved him; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That we recognize the life, community service,
6 and long legislative service of Rep. Wait; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
8 presented to Rep. Wait's two surviving brothers and
9 sisters-in-law, Roger and Nancy Wait and Dean and Karen Wait,
10 as a symbol of our deepest sympathy.