



SR0594

LRB104 20497 RMO 33970 r

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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 Rick Garcia of the Edgewater neighborhood of Chicago, who passed away on January 12, 2026; and

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WHEREAS, Rick Garcia was a longtime Chicago LGBTQ activist and fierce organizer who spent decades fighting for equality, justice, and dignity in Illinois and beyond; known for a direct approach to activism and a focus on strategy, he played a key role in translating grassroots power into legislative wins and was at the forefront of many civil rights victories; he was inducted into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame in 1999; and

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WHEREAS, Rick Garcia was born on September 15, 1956 in St. Louis, Missouri, where he was involved in organizing for the United Farm Workers as a young man; while attending St. Louis University, he found his voice as a gay rights advocate and joined the gay Catholic group Dignity in St. Louis; he had a deep love for the Catholic Church and worked throughout his life to make it a spiritual home for LGBTQ people; and

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WHEREAS, Rick Garcia worked for the liberal gay Catholic group New Ways Ministry in Washington, D.C. before moving to Chicago in 1986; he joined the effort to pass the city's Human

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1 Rights Ordinance, which was enacted in 1988, and was a leading
2 advocate for passage of the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance
3 of 1993 and the expanded Illinois Human Rights Act of 2005; he
4 was a leader in lobbying for gay marriage in Illinois, which
5 became law in 2013; and

6 WHEREAS, Rick Garcia was a principal founder of the
7 Illinois Federation for Human Rights, later renamed Equality
8 Illinois, in 1992 and served as its public policy director;
9 after his time with The Civil Rights Agenda, he went on to work
10 within government, including a role with the Cook County
11 Sheriff's Office and, most recently, the Illinois Secretary of
12 State's Office; and

13 WHEREAS, Rick Garcia was a gourmet cook who loved to
14 dance; he will be remembered for his deep sense of loyalty, his
15 humor, and his care for his loved ones; and

16 WHEREAS, Rick Garcia was preceded in death by his partner
17 of 40 years, activist Ernie Hunsperger, on April 9, 2020;
18 therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL
20 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
21 Rick Garcia and extend our sincere condolences to his family,
22 friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
2 presented to the close friends and family of Rick Garcia as an
3 expression of our deepest sympathy.