



SR0606

LRB104 20532 ECR 34007 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the passing of former Illinois State Senator William E. "Bill" Peterson Jr. of Long Grove who passed away on January 11, 2026; and

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WHEREAS, Senator Peterson was born to William Edward Peterson Sr. and Frances Weismantel on February 2, 1936 in Chicago, where he was raised and developed a lifelong commitment to public service, education, and community involvement; and

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WHEREAS, Senator Peterson attended Lane Technical High School and graduated from Schurz High School in 1956, later earning induction into the Schurz High School Alumni Hall of Fame; and

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WHEREAS, Senator Peterson pursued his associate's degree at Wright Junior College; and

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WHEREAS, Senator Peterson proudly served his country in the United States Army, where he was stationed in Okinawa, Japan; and

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WHEREAS, Following his military service, Senator Peterson

1 received his bachelor's degree from North Park College in 1960
2 and his master's degree in education from Northern Illinois
3 University in 1965, and he completed postgraduate studies at
4 Loyola University; and

5 WHEREAS, Senator Peterson devoted the early years of his
6 career to education, serving as a teacher in Northbrook and
7 Glenview, as principal of Ravinia School in Highland Park, and
8 later as director of Field Services for the Illinois
9 Association of School Boards; and

10 WHEREAS, Senator Peterson was elected Supervisor of Vernon
11 Township in 1975, a position he held with dedication and
12 distinction for more than four decades until 2017, during
13 which time he created and expanded vital programs benefiting
14 children and seniors, including summer camps, parks programs,
15 reduced-fare taxi services, and the Township food pantry, and
16 he played a key role in bringing the Prairie View Metra station
17 to Lincolnshire; and

18 WHEREAS, Senator Peterson served in the Illinois House of
19 Representatives from 1982 to 1992, and he was elected to the
20 Illinois State Senate in 1992, where he served until his
21 retirement in 2008, including service as assistant minority
22 leader; and

1 WHEREAS, As a legislator, Senator Peterson was a steadfast
2 advocate for educational access, affordable housing, the
3 earned income tax credit, and the expansion of early voting,
4 and he was widely respected by colleagues on both sides of the
5 aisle for his integrity, character, and deep institutional
6 knowledge; and

7 WHEREAS, Senator Peterson also enjoyed lifelong passions
8 for history and travel, and he was a devoted fan of the Chicago
9 Bears and the Chicago Cubs; and

10 WHEREAS, Above all else, Senator Peterson treasured his
11 family, finding his greatest joy in his wife, his children,
12 his grandchildren, and his loved ones, delighting them with
13 his warmth, humor, and devotion; and

14 WHEREAS, Senator Peterson was preceded in death by his
15 parents; his sister, Vera; and his children, Wendy Peterson
16 and Brad Peterson; and

17 WHEREAS, Senator Peterson is survived by his wife of 67
18 years, Patricia; his children, Mark Peterson and Lori; five
19 grandchildren; and his dog, Rocky; therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL
21 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of

1 former State Senator William E. "Bill" Peterson Jr. and extend
2 our sincere condolences to his family, friends, and all who
3 knew and loved him; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
5 presented to the family of Senator Peterson as an expression
6 of our deepest sympathy.