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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Rev. Jesse Jackson, a towering civil rights icon who battled alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., negotiated global hostage releases, and shamed corporations for their lack of corporate diversity and failure to support voting rights, passed away on February 17, 2026 at the age of 84; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson was born in Greenville, South Carolina in 1941 and attended a segregated high school; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson's rise to prominence began in 1960 at the age of 18 when he and seven other men were arrested for protesting segregation at their town's public library; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson, by 1965, had marched alongside Dr. King and others from Selma to Montgomery to push for Black voting rights, and by 1967, he was running operations for Dr. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in Chicago, the city that would become his home; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson was just feet away from Dr. King when he was assassinated in 1968; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson guided the SCLC's Operation Breadbasket use of boycotts and public attention to pressure

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1 companies to hire more Black workers; and

2 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson earned his divinity degree after
3 being ordained a minister in 1968; and

4 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson traveled to Syria in 1983 to
5 negotiate the release of an American pilot shot down over
6 Lebanon, and the next summer, he negotiated the release of 22
7 Americans and 26 political prisoners from Cuba after meeting
8 with former dictator Fidel Castro; and

9 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson founded the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition
10 and ran for president as a Democrat in 1984 and 1988,
11 energizing and registering millions of Black voters; and

12 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson opposed the pending invasion of Iraq
13 in 1990 and negotiated the release of hundreds of people who
14 Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein had threatened to use as human
15 shields, and then in 1999, he won the release of three U.S.
16 POWs during the Kosovo War; and

17 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson was awarded the Presidential Medal
18 of Freedom in 2000 by President Bill Clinton for his decades of
19 work to make the world a better place; therefore, be it

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

1 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
2 Rev. Jesse Jackson and extend our sincere condolences to his
3 family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it
4 further

5 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
6 presented to the family of Rev. Jackson as a symbol of our
7 deepest sympathy.