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LRB104 20820 MST 34364 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 Diane Kay Rutledge of Springfield, who passed away on February 3, 2026; and

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WHEREAS, Diane Rutledge was born on December 8, 1950; and

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WHEREAS, Diane Rutledge began her career with District 186 as a teacher at Dubois Elementary School before she championed gifted programs, served as assistant principal, and led Owen Marsh Elementary School with steady, compassionate leadership; and

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WHEREAS, Diane Rutledge continued her service to District 186 as assistant superintendent in multiple roles, shaping curriculum, strengthening school operations, and advancing innovation in elementary schools; as deputy superintendent and later superintendent of schools, she guided with wisdom, integrity, and an unwavering belief in the potential of every student and educator; and

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WHEREAS, Diane Rutledge dedicated her life to serving others; she worked with numerous organizations and boards, including the Springfield Public Schools Foundation, Memorial Health Systems, Wooden It Be Lovely, United Way of Central

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1 Illinois, the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln,
2 the Springfield Chamber of Commerce, the Springfield
3 Children's Museum, the Springfield Area Arts Council,
4 Leadership Springfield, and more; and

5 WHEREAS, Diane Rutledge, in retirement, led the Large Unit
6 District Association for ten years and continued her advocacy
7 for public education by lobbying on behalf of PK-12 large
8 districts and mentoring superintendents across the State of
9 Illinois; she served on countless state-wide committees and
10 commissions, including the P-20 Council, which advocated for a
11 pipeline from preschool through college and career, focusing
12 on aligning policies, improving student readiness, closing
13 achievement gaps, and strengthening teacher quality; and

14 WHEREAS, Diane Rutledge received numerous awards,
15 including the First Citizen Award, the Illinois State Board of
16 Education's Those Who Excel Award of Excellence, the Good as
17 Gold Lifetime Achievement Award, the Athena Award, and Western
18 Illinois University's Distinguished Alumni Award; and

19 WHEREAS, Diane Rutledge was a devoted educator, community
20 member, mentor, and friend who worked passionately to improve
21 the lives of those around her; and

22 WHEREAS, Diane Rutledge is survived by her husband, Steve;

1 her brother, Stephan (Jeanne) Jurkins; her sister, Sandy
2 (John) Croxton; and numerous nieces and nephews; therefore, be
3 it

4 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL
5 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
6 Diane Kay Rutledge and extend our sincere condolences to her
7 family, friends, and all who knew and loved her; and be it
8 further

9 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
10 presented to the family of Diane Rutledge as a symbol of our
11 deepest sympathy.