



SR0637

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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 Reverend Jesse Jackson, who passed away on February 17, 2026; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson was a luminary of the Civil Rights Movement, a transformative politician for Illinois and the United States of America, and a faithful Baptist minister ordained in Chicago; and

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WHEREAS, As a notable civil rights leader for over 60 years, Rev. Jackson was committed to working toward the betterment of all people, participating in a multitude of efforts dedicated to fighting against racial discrimination and segregation, including a sit-in at a whites-only public library in Greenville, South Carolina in 1960; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson was born in Greenville, South Carolina on October 8, 1941; he attended Sterling High School, where he served as class president, was tenth in his graduating class, and participated in baseball, football, and basketball, gaining letters in all sports; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson's ties to Illinois began with him receiving a scholarship to play football at the University of

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1 Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where he attended for one year; and

2 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson later moved to Chicago, where he
3 received a Rockefeller grant and enrolled at the Chicago
4 Theological Seminary before pursuing activism full time in the
5 Civil Rights Movement; the following year, he and several
6 students drove from Chicago to Selma, Alabama to join Rev. Dr.
7 Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership
8 Conference (SCLC) on their campaign for voting rights,
9 participating in the historic 1965 march from Selma to
10 Montgomery; and

11 WHEREAS, During this time, Rev. Jackson also worked with
12 Dr. King to lay the groundwork for his Chicago Freedom
13 Movement, expanding the regional impact of the Civil Rights
14 Movement; and

15 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson worked with Dr. King to create and
16 facilitate a branch of the SCLC in Chicago; through this
17 diligent effort, he oversaw and led Operation Breadbasket
18 beginning in 1967, an initiative dedicated to promoting
19 awareness of Black-owned businesses and creating opportunities
20 for the Black workforce, bringing nearly 5,000 jobs to the
21 Black community over the several years it was in operation;
22 and

1 WHEREAS, That same year, Rev. Jackson established
2 Operation PUSH, initially known as People United to Save
3 Humanity, in the Kenwood neighborhood of Chicago to build and
4 strengthen the economic conditions of Black communities across
5 America; and

6 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson later created the National Rainbow
7 Coalition in 1984 to further the fight for equal rights for
8 all; emphasizing his constant efforts in pursuing economic
9 equality for marginalized communities, coalition members took
10 a stand against policies that would impact the success of
11 their communities and worked to support all groups negatively
12 impacted by the economic policies of the Reagan
13 administration; and

14 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson later departed from both Operation
15 PUSH and the National Rainbow Coalition to continue the fight
16 for social justice and economic equality for all people in the
17 United States; and

18 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson launched his first presidential
19 campaign in 1984 and his second in 1988, further cementing his
20 dedication towards achieving social equality for all; and

21 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson demonstrated his commitment to
22 service and community engagement by serving as a shadow

1 delegate and shadow U.S. Senator for the District of Columbia
2 from 1991 to 1997; and

3 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson served as a successful advisor in
4 international diplomacy, securing the release of captives in
5 Syria, Iraq, and Kosovo, advocating for peace in Northern
6 Ireland, and serving as President Bill Clinton's special envoy
7 of democracy to Kenya; and

8 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson merged Operation PUSH and the
9 National Rainbow Coalition in 1996 to continue his fight for
10 Black social justice and corporate accountability; and

11 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson's dedication to the country,
12 commitment to service, and allegiance to advancing civil
13 rights were recognized by President Clinton, who honored him
14 with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest
15 civilian honor, in August 2000; and

16 WHEREAS, Rev. Jackson was the loving husband of Jacqueline
17 Lavinia Jackson, who he married on December 31, 1962, and the
18 proud father of Santita Jackson, Jesse Jackson Jr., Jonathan
19 Jackson, Yusef DuBois Jackson, Jacqueline Lavinia Jackson, and
20 Ashley Jackson; and

21 WHEREAS, It is highly fitting that State of Illinois honor

1 the life of Rev. Jackson, including his unwavering commitment
2 to public service, his unrelenting drive toward the betterment
3 of African Americans, and his indelible impact on the Civil
4 Rights Movement; therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL
6 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
7 Reverend Jesse Jackson and extend our sincere condolences to
8 his family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it
9 further

10 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
11 presented to the family of Rev. Jackson as an expression of our
12 deepest sympathy.