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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 Olgha Sierra Sandman, who passed away on January 27, 2026; and

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WHEREAS, Olgha Sandman, the daughter of Reverend Daniel Sierra Barocio and Luz Ramos Sierra, was born in Linares, Nuevo Leon, Mexico in 1927; she enrolled at the Baptist Missionary Training School in Chicago in 1950; she married J. Robert (Bob) Sandman in 1955; and

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WHEREAS, Olgha Sandman initially worked as a teacher in Monterrey, and she also worked with children in Migrant Ministry in the summer of 1951; and

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WHEREAS, Olgha Sandman dedicated her career to supporting immigrant farmworkers, starting with her participation in the Delano Grape Boycott in 1970; she was a supporter and colleague of Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, and she was active with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), the United Farm Workers, and other organizations; and

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WHEREAS, Olgha Sandman served as the founding director of the Illinois Farm Worker Ministry from 1974 to 1992, on the

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1 board of directors of the National Farm Workers Ministry since
2 its founding in 1970, and as interim president and director of
3 the National Farm Worker Ministry in the late 1990s; she
4 launched the Illinois Farm Worker Service Center in 1981, and
5 she co-founded the Farmworker and Landscaper Advocacy Project
6 (FLAP) in 1999; she was also instrumental in advocating for
7 passage of the Illinois Field Sanitation Law and the
8 legalization of undocumented workers under the Immigration
9 Reform and Control Act; and

10 WHEREAS, Olgha Sandman was a member of First
11 Congregational UCC in Downers Grove for 45 years, and she was
12 also a member of San Lucas United Church of Christ in Chicago;
13 she and her husband served as volunteer missionaries for the
14 Board for World Ministries for one year, establishing the
15 Istanbul, Turkey Interparish Migrants Project; she also served
16 as a farm worker/immigration coordinator on the State Board
17 Ecumenical Action Committee; and

18 WHEREAS, Olgha Sandman received many awards and
19 recognitions throughout her life, including being selected as
20 one of the Ten Top Women in Dayton, Ohio in 1967, receiving an
21 honorary Doctor of Letters from the Chicago Theological
22 Seminary in 1991, the Sor Juana Award by the National Museum of
23 Mexican Arts in Pilsen, and the Governor's Award for
24 Excellence during Latino Heritage Month in 2014, being

1 inducted into the Union Hall of Honor by the Illinois Labor
2 History Society in 2015, receiving the Service Award for
3 Dedicated Service to Church Women United in 2017 and a
4 certificate of Appreciation from Cesar Chavez and the
5 Executive United Farm Workers Board, and being recognized as
6 one of Five Outstanding Immigrants in Illinois; and

7 WHEREAS, Olgha Sandman collaborated with the late Julie
8 Shannon and her husband Bill Geller in the 1999 production of
9 the musical Let The Eagle Fly, the story of Cesar Chavez and
10 the farm workers, which had its Chicago debut at the Mercury
11 Theater in 2021; and

12 WHEREAS, Olgha Sandman lived a life of faith and service,
13 and she had a magnetic and charismatic personality; and

14 WHEREAS, Olgha Sandman was preceded in death by her
15 parents; her husband; her son, Richard Sandman; her grandson,
16 Nicholas Sandman; and ten siblings; and

17 WHEREAS, Olgha Sandman is survived by her children, Bob
18 (Kathy) Sandman, Linda (Rich Wheelock) Sandman, and Rodney
19 (Karin) Sandman; eight grandchildren; and two
20 great-grandchildren; therefore, be it

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

1 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
2 Olga Sierra Sandman and extend our sincere condolences to her
3 family, friends, and all who knew and loved her; and be it
4 further

5 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
6 presented to the family of Olga Sandman as an expression of
7 our deepest sympathy.