



HR0787

LRB102 27023 LAW 38311 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Helen Marie Ramirez-Odell of Chicago, who passed away on March 22, 2022; and

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WHEREAS, Helen Ramirez-Odell was born to Irving J. and Jessamine Hershinow in Chicago on July 22, 1942; she grew up in the Lincoln Square neighborhood; she attended Loyola University Chicago, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing and her Registered Nurse license in 1964; and

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WHEREAS, Helen Ramirez-Odell worked as a nurse at Chicago Public Schools for over 40 years before retiring in 2001; and

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WHEREAS, Helen Ramirez-Odell's activism began in the 1960s when she discovered she could not secure credit to make a purchase from Goldblatt's because she was a woman, leading her to join the Chicago National Organization for Women (NOW), where she became an activist for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment; and

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WHEREAS, Helen Ramirez-Odell joined the Chicago Teachers Union in the 1970s and became a member of its Women's Rights Committee, which she chaired from 1984 to 2009; during her

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1 tenure, the committee worked to end sexual harassment,
2 supported women's advancement at the Washburne Trade School,
3 sought to improve conditions and employment for women in
4 sports, promoted women's labor history, supported women
5 political candidates, and fought for women's health, birth
6 control, and reproductive choice; she was also active in the
7 Chicago Coalition of Labor Union Women and Cassandra, a
8 Radical Feminist Nurses Network; and

9 WHEREAS, Helen Ramirez-Odell helped found the Women in
10 Labor History Project in 1995, later called the Working
11 Women's History Project, which is a nonprofit organization
12 focused on preserving and promoting the stories of historical
13 and living Chicago women who have contributed to achieving
14 justice and equality in areas of labor, women's health, and
15 civil rights; her book, Working Without Uniforms: School
16 Nursing in Chicago 1951-2001, which is a collection of oral
17 histories of Chicago Public School nurses, was published as
18 one of the first acts of the Working Women's History Project;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, Helen Ramirez-Odell, with a coalition from across
21 the City of Chicago, worked on the Mother Jones Heritage
22 Project, campaigning for a Mother Jones statue to honor the
23 contributions of Mother Jones to the Labor Movement and to
24 women; and

1 WHEREAS, Helen Ramirez-Odell was a loving wife, mother,
2 sister, grandmother, great-grandmother, and aunt and a fierce
3 activist; and

4 WHEREAS, Helen Ramirez-Odell was preceded in death by her
5 parents; and

6 WHEREAS, Helen Ramirez-Odell is survived by her husband,
7 Paul A. Odell; her daughter, Moira (Ramirez) Melendez; her
8 stepchildren, Cyndi (Odell) Christel and Stephen (Merri)
9 Odell; her grandchildren, Michael Melendez, Carson (Sarah),
10 Steve, Ryan (Emily), and David; her great-grandchildren,
11 Makailyn, Isabelle, and Ryan Junior; her brothers, Bob (the
12 late Pat) Hershinow and Paul Hershinow; her nephew, Kevin
13 McLinden; her cousins, Ellen Nyberg and Larry (Marianne)
14 Nyberg; and a host of other friends and family; therefore, be
15 it

16 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
17 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
18 we mourn the passing of Helen Marie Ramirez-Odell and extend
19 our sincere condolences to her family, friends, and all who
20 knew and loved her; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be

1 presented to the family of Helen Ramirez-Odell as an
2 expression of our deepest sympathy.