



HR1046

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1

HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, There are few members in the history of the  
3 Illinois General Assembly who have had as great an impact on  
4 the lives of millions of Illinois residents as House Majority  
5 Leader Greg Harris; and

6           WHEREAS, While serving the residents of the 13th District  
7 over the course of the last 16 years in the Illinois General  
8 Assembly, Leader Harris has established a reputation as a  
9 respected and esteemed legislator, a trusted and honest  
10 negotiator, and a master policy expert who combines humility  
11 and civility with an unparalleled work ethic to achieve  
12 historic legislative initiatives; and

13           WHEREAS, Originally from Colorado, Leader Harris attended  
14 the University of Colorado at Boulder, earning a degree in  
15 journalism, and, after moving to Chicago, began his career in  
16 marketing and governmental relations at the National Home  
17 Furnishings Association; and

18           WHEREAS, While the association left Chicago in 1988,  
19 Leader Harris stayed and co-founded Open Hands Chicago, an  
20 in-home meal delivery program targeting people living with HIV  
21 and AIDS, serving 41,476 meals in its first year of operation  
22 in 1989 and 750,000 meals by the end of 1994; and

1           WHEREAS, Following his community involvement, Leader  
2 Harris served as the chief of staff to former 48th Ward  
3 Alderwoman Mary Ann Smith for 14 years, establishing strong  
4 relationships across the city and with social service agencies  
5 and managing various political campaigns in the city; and

6           WHEREAS, Upon his election to the Illinois House of  
7 Representatives in 2006, Leader Harris became the first openly  
8 gay man to succeed another openly gay man, the late  
9 Representative Larry McKeon, in the State legislature; and

10           WHEREAS, Leader Harris has taken his personal experiences  
11 as an openly gay man, an activist during the AIDS crisis, and a  
12 person living openly with HIV to fuel his policy agenda and  
13 raise the profile of human services issues, and while chairing  
14 the House Human Services and Appropriations-Human Services  
15 committees, he ensured that government worked to expand and  
16 enhance supports and services for those who need it the most;  
17 and

18           WHEREAS, Leader Harris spearheaded marriage equality,  
19 advancing the issue for numerous terms until passing a bill  
20 was possible, spending a year folding roll calls in his jacket  
21 pocket to track his progress gathering support for the  
22 measure, and ultimately enshrining same-sex marriage in

1 Illinois; and

2 WHEREAS, When many of the human service providers with  
3 whom Leader Harris worked faced a crisis as a result of a  
4 protracted budget impasse, he assumed the role of lead budget  
5 negotiator for the House Democratic Caucus, ultimately helping  
6 to forge the bipartisan compromise that balanced the budget,  
7 restored funding for lifesaving services, and set Illinois  
8 back on the path to fiscal responsibility; and

9 WHEREAS, Leader Harris was elevated to Majority Leader in  
10 2019, making history as the first openly gay legislative  
11 leader in the Illinois General Assembly, and during a landmark  
12 legislative session under his leadership, \$45 billion was  
13 allocated toward rebuilding crumbling roads and bridges,  
14 draconian marijuana prohibition was ended, the minimum wage  
15 for Illinois working people was raised, and the right to  
16 choose was enshrined in law; and

17 WHEREAS, Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Leader Harris  
18 championed efforts to secure the medical care and vaccines all  
19 Illinoisans needed, while remaining a leading voice for  
20 extending financial relief to struggling small businesses; and

21 WHEREAS, Leader Harris maintains a wide variety of  
22 interests outside the General Assembly, including an abiding

1 appreciation of bacon, watching little-seen science fiction  
2 movies, maintaining a unique collection of socks, raising  
3 awareness of days of recognition and celebration on social  
4 media, and acting as a human companion to Tip the Cat; and

5 WHEREAS, Leader Harris, who leaves the Illinois General  
6 Assembly with a void that will be impossible for a single  
7 individual to fill, is a well-known advocate for equality and  
8 fairness throughout the state, a treasured figure in his  
9 community and the City of Chicago, a respected colleague to  
10 members of the General Assembly on both sides of the aisle, a  
11 compassionate leader who embodies the spirit of public  
12 service, a voice for those who are often voiceless, and a  
13 dedicated and dear friend to many, and he leaves a legacy  
14 worthy of enduring remembrance; and

15 WHEREAS, In his community and throughout Illinois, the  
16 lives of those whom he has befriended and represented and for  
17 whom he has been an advocate are fundamentally richer because  
18 of Leader Harris' compassion, his tireless work, and his  
19 everyday efforts to inspire joy in those around him;  
20 therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
22 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
23 we offer our profound thanks to House Majority Leader Greg

1 Harris for his 16 years of dedicated service to the people of  
2 Illinois and congratulate him on his retirement from the  
3 Illinois House of Representatives; and be it further

4       RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
5 presented to Leader Harris as an expression of our gratitude,  
6 respect, and best wishes.