



HR0637

LRB103 39604 LAW 69907 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of  
3 Representatives wish to congratulate Joseph L. "Joe" Belman on  
4 the occasion of his 100th birthday and thank him for his  
5 military service during World War II; and

6           WHEREAS, Joe Belman has spent his life serving his  
7 community and his country with honor; and

8           WHEREAS, Joe Belman was born in Pontiac on February 20,  
9 1924; he was adopted by Louise and Irene Belman; during his  
10 upbringing, the lessons of diligence, responsibility, and  
11 community he was taught became the cornerstones of his  
12 character; and

13           WHEREAS, In his youth, Joe Belman worked on the  
14 Mississippi River, where he found unexpected joy and  
15 tranquility; and

16           WHEREAS, Joe Belman enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Force  
17 during World War II, serving as a B-17 Flying Fortress ball  
18 turret gunner and achieving the rank of staff sergeant; while  
19 exposed to the dangers of anti-aircraft fire and enemy  
20 fighters during his 35 missions over enemy territory in the  
21 European theater, his valorous actions contributed to pushing

1 the enemy out of Europe and into Germany; and

2 WHEREAS, For his military service, Joe Belman was awarded  
3 the Air Medal with five Oak Clusters and the European Ribbon  
4 with three Battle Stars; and

5 WHEREAS, Joe Belman returned to the United States in April  
6 1945, taking a unique journey home by hitchhiking across the  
7 country; and

8 WHEREAS, Joe Belman married Irene in 1947, and together  
9 they shared 59 wonderful years; and

10 WHEREAS, Joe Belman's commitment to service and advocacy  
11 persisted beyond his wartime service; he showcased his  
12 enduring dedication to community welfare through his  
13 involvement in the Citizens' Utility Board and the Will County  
14 Jury Commission and his leadership roles in the American G.I.  
15 Forum and the Illinois Hispanic Democratic Council; and

16 WHEREAS, Joe Belman also served as a union organizer in  
17 Lockport, dedicating himself to promoting safer working  
18 environments and higher wages, and he helped form Service  
19 Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 650, serving as its  
20 first president; and

1           WHEREAS, Joe Belman's impact has extended beyond formal  
2 roles, with involvement in youth development, coaching various  
3 sports, and community leadership, which earned him numerous  
4 accolades; and

5           WHEREAS, Joe Belman's journey, from the tranquil waters of  
6 the Mississippi River to the tumultuous skies over Germany, is  
7 a testament to resilience, dedication to community, and the  
8 enduring spirit of the Greatest Generation; and

9           WHEREAS, Joe Belman's life exemplifies the principles of  
10 democracy, equality, and empowerment, inspiring and guiding  
11 generations to come and leaving an indelible mark on the  
12 landscape of labor and community service beyond the boundaries  
13 of Illinois; therefore, be it

14           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
15 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
16 we congratulate Joseph L. "Joe" Belman on his 100th birthday,  
17 thank him for his military service to the United States of  
18 America, and recognize his century-long journey and his  
19 enduring impact on workers' rights advocacy and mentorship in  
20 youth development; and be it further

21           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
22 presented to Joe Belman as an expression of our esteem and

HR0637

-4-

LRB103 39604 LAW 69907 r

1 respect.