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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 Annie Katherine (Griffin) Betts; and

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WHEREAS, Annie Betts was born to Irene Spruill Griffin and Tom Griffin in Macon, Mississippi on September 27, 1948; she was raised in Macon and was a member of St. Mark CME Church; she attended Liddell Middle School and graduated from Liddell High School in 1966, where she was a member of the Drama Club, crowned homecoming queen of the Carnation Ball, and was an advocate for Black students seeking to host a parade, a first for the school; she earned her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Rust College, a historically Black college in Holly Springs, Mississippi, where she joined the Iota Gamma Chapter of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. and was crowned Miss Phi Beta Sigma during the Rust College Miss Phi Beta Sigma Scholarship Pageant in 1969; she married Sammy Betts at Grant Memorial AME Church in Chicago on August 17, 1969, and they moved to Chicago in 1970; and

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WHEREAS, Annie Betts was a respected and valued third and fourth grade teacher at Emerson Elementary School in Maywood, starting in 1970; during her tenure, she earned her master's degree in reading from Roosevelt University in Chicago in 1985; over the course of her career, she was noted for serving

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1 her students above and beyond, becoming family in the process;
2 while working at Emerson, she developed and managed three
3 organizations, the liturgical dance group Sunshine System, the
4 competitive dance troupe The Smart Girls, and the singing
5 group Vision, which performed at the Apollo Theater in New
6 York; she also instituted the Miss and Mr. Emerson Pageant and
7 was the head of the Emerson Drama Club and Emerson Speech Club;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Annie Betts became a trailblazing educator at
10 Emerson Elementary School, risking her position to fight for a
11 Black history program at the school, which was successful; she
12 became a consultant for Black history programs and
13 performances at various schools and events; she additionally
14 acted as a performance consultant for her sister Mary Jean's
15 students at Metropolitan Primary Academy in Chicago; and

16 WHEREAS, After retiring from Emerson Elementary School in
17 2004, Annie Betts became the director of Tutorial
18 Curriculum/Program at Neighborhood United Methodist Church in
19 Maywood from 2008 to 2014; and

20 WHEREAS, Annie Betts gave her time to several
21 organizations; she served Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. for 55
22 years; she joined Daughters of Honor 622 of the Improved
23 Benevolent Protective Order of Elks of the World in 1981,

1 receiving the Past State President's Degree in Peoria in 1982
2 and the Past Grand Daughter Rulers Honors, the organization's
3 highest honor, in Miami, Florida in 1983; she was given the
4 distinguished honor of being appointed Grand District Deputy
5 over several temples in the State of Illinois in 1990; she
6 became a member of Heliotrope Temple #29 in 2005, where she was
7 a member until it regrettably folded, before joining Mary
8 McLeod Bethune Temple #1183, remaining a member until her
9 passing; and

10 WHEREAS, Annie Betts continued to play an active part in
11 Black history, from her days at Liddell High School to riding a
12 bus from Chicago to Washington, D.C. to witness the
13 inauguration of the first Black president of the United
14 States, Barack Obama; and

15 WHEREAS, Annie Betts was an unforgettable and proud Black
16 woman known for her loving soul, her willingness to do
17 anything for those she held dear, and her devotion to her
18 family; she will be remembered for her service as a champion to
19 and for her people; and

20 WHEREAS, Annie Betts was the wife of Sammy for 54 years,
21 the mother of Sana Sierra and Samuel Rilán, and the
22 grandmother of Kyla and Addison; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL
2 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
3 Annie Katherine (Griffin) Betts and extend our sincere
4 condolences to her family, friends, and all who knew and loved
5 her; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
7 presented to the family of Annie Betts as an expression of our
8 deepest sympathy.