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1 SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The 7th Senate District is one of the most
3 ethnically diverse districts in the State of Illinois; and

4 WHEREAS, The district has long been and increasingly is
5 home to Black people from every corner of the vast and
6 beautiful Black diaspora; and

7 WHEREAS, The Black and African-American communities of the
8 district have a rich history of achievements, culture,
9 activism, and countless other contributions to the vibrancy
10 and uniqueness of the district; and

11 WHEREAS, Graceland Cemetery, located in the district in
12 Lakeview, is the permanent resting place for 29 leaders of the
13 Underground Railroad network that helped many thousands of
14 enslaved African-American people find freedom; and

15 WHEREAS, Uptown was one of the first places
16 African-Americans could live on the north side outside the
17 Black Belt, despite experiencing intense racism and
18 discrimination once they moved there; and

19 WHEREAS, The family of Sen. Mike Simmons, who represents
20 the 7th District, was one of the first Black families to move

1 into and integrate the Lincoln Square neighborhood just two
2 years before he was born there in the early 1980s; and

3 WHEREAS, Sen. Simmons, who is of Ethiopian and
4 African-American descent, is proud to have grown up in one of
5 the very first scattered-site public housing apartment
6 buildings built on the north side of Chicago in Lincoln Square
7 in 1981; and

8 WHEREAS, Sen. Simmons is the first Black person to
9 represent the far north side of Chicago's 7th District in the
10 Illinois State Senate; and

11 WHEREAS, Black elders currently residing in the 7th
12 District as longtime residents were some of the first Black
13 people decades ago to move into communities such as Buena
14 Park, Rogers Park, Lincoln Square, Andersonville, Budlong
15 Woods, Uptown, Edgewater, Lakeview, West Ridge, and other
16 areas of the district; and

17 WHEREAS, Black elders have left a rich legacy in the
18 district by creating safe spaces and being role models for
19 youth of all races and ethnicities; and

20 WHEREAS, The Black Panther Party established a legacy of
21 mutual aid and humanity across racial lines, which continues

1 to shape the community-led mutual aid efforts in Uptown, on
2 Argyle Street, in Rogers Park, along the Winthrop and Kenmore
3 corridors, and in other 7th District areas; and

4 WHEREAS, The 7th District is home to the historic Winthrop
5 Family Garden, which honors the legacy of African-American
6 families who made the historic move during the Great Migration
7 and began building a Black residential community along the
8 4600 North block of Winthrop Avenue as early as the year 1910;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Winthrop Avenue was the only block on which Black
11 families could live because of segregation, with scores of
12 racial covenants hindering them from moving onto other blocks
13 in Uptown; with only 18 families living on 4600 North Winthrop
14 Avenue, they formed a community that supported each other and
15 became one family despite the restrictive covenants intended
16 to keep Uptown segregated; the Winthrop Family Garden stands
17 as a place of remembrance and celebrates what it took to make
18 Uptown what it is today; and

19 WHEREAS, Many Black residents, including whole villages
20 and communities, have been displaced from the far north side
21 over the decades, including from parts of neighborhoods within
22 the 7th District; and

1 WHEREAS, Those same Black residents left their mark on
2 nearly every neighborhood in the north lake front district;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, The future of the 7th District is as bright as the
5 past, as Black people continue to run small businesses of
6 every type, continue to graduate from schools, and assume
7 leadership roles in their communities, in the region, and in
8 our state in every imaginable way; and

9 WHEREAS, Uptown features small businesses from West and
10 Central Africa, such as Osas African Kitchen, the Nigerian
11 Kitchen Restaurant, the Mukase African Restaurant, the Makola
12 African Supermarket, Amen African Braiding, the Iyanze Bar &
13 Cafe, The Good Shepherd Enterprise, B&Q Afro Root Cuisine, the
14 Queen African Hair Braiding Salon, and Chem's African Hair
15 Braiding, among others; and

16 WHEREAS, Edgewater, Uptown, and Rogers Park are home to an
17 extensive Eritrean and Ethiopian population spread along
18 Broadway and Clark Street with family-run businesses such as
19 the Axum Ethiopian Restaurant, the Ethiopian Diamond, the
20 Awash Ethiopian Restaurant, Tesfa Ethiopian Cuisine, the Selam
21 Ethiopian Kitchen, Queen Sheba, the Ethio Mart, the Mella
22 Cafe, the Demera Restaurant, the Kukulu Market, the Ethio
23 Mart, the Denden Restaurant, and Meron Injera; and

1 WHEREAS, Howard Avenue in Rogers Park is home to many
2 Black-owned Caribbean small businesses, such as the Kizin
3 Creole Restaurant, Caribbean Cuts, the Good To Go Restaurant,
4 the Caribbean American Baking Co., and Ashley Beauty Supply;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, The 7th District is home to many Black Americans
7 and African-Americans and is comprised of a glorious multitude
8 of ethnic groups from all over Africa, including those from
9 Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Senegal, Mali,
10 Togo, Congo, Cameroon, Sudan, the Caribbean, and South
11 America, many of whom found refuge along Broadway and Sheridan
12 in Uptown and along Howard Avenue in Rogers Park and built a
13 community; and

14 WHEREAS, The Bryn Mawr Historic District in Edgewater is
15 home to a growing number of new African-American and Black and
16 LGBTQ+-owned small businesses that bring vibrancy to this
17 historic corridor; and

18 WHEREAS, Ebony DeBerry, a Black woman and lifelong
19 resident of Rogers Park, wanted to build a community of people
20 who lifted each other and gave back to the community she had
21 growing up; she helped develop ONE Northside, which is a mixed
22 income, multi-ethnic, intergenerational community-based

1 organization that brings together the diverse communities of
2 Chicago's far north side and uses collective power to address
3 injustice and advance the community's interests; she has
4 created safe spaces for women of color to come together, share
5 resources, and encourage each other; and

6 WHEREAS, Jackie Taylor, a Black woman and longtime
7 resident of Uptown, founded the Black Ensemble Theater in
8 1976, which is the first cultural center in the nation
9 dedicated to eradicating racism through the arts; the Black
10 Ensemble Theater is a crown jewel of the 7th District,
11 bringing together not only Black residents but people from all
12 racial and ethnic backgrounds to celebrate through free
13 outdoor concerts for the community on the 4400 block of North
14 Clark Street, unique plays, and other programming that
15 celebrates the arts in the district; and

16 WHEREAS, Dr. Ana Vicky Castillo, an advocate for the
17 education of the Latin and African diaspora, created the Afro
18 Latino Historical Society and the African Diaspora Museum; she
19 has worked tirelessly to reclaim the legacy of the forgotten
20 history of the African-American and Latin community; she has
21 helped inform the public of the great achievements of the
22 Afro-Latino and African immigrant communities; therefore, be
23 it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL
2 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we recognize the Black
3 and African-American communities of the 7th Senate District
4 and express our deep appreciation and respect for the myriad
5 of Black communities that currently reside in and have lived
6 in the 7th District; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That we celebrate the history, achievements,
8 culture, activism, and countless other contributions that
9 Black people from a vast and beautiful diaspora have made to
10 the 7th Senate District of Illinois on the far north side of
11 Chicago.