



SR1079

LRB103 41047 LAW 74257 r

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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 David E. Elder of rural Petersburg, who passed away on May 5, 2024; and

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WHEREAS, David Elder was born to David and Clara Elder in East Saint Louis on October 28, 1927; he was raised in the Carbondale area during the Great Depression and assisted in the operations of the family farm from a young age; he also worked as an orchard laborer and a clerk at the Kroger store in Cobden, and he sold chickens and fresh fruit and vegetables door-to-door with his father in Carbondale; he attended Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) until he was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1946, serving as part of the Occupation of Japan during World War II; while stationed in Japan, he was a member of the mission group The Far Eastern Gospel Crusade; and

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WHEREAS, Upon returning to the U.S. in 1947, David Elder returned to school on the GI Bill; he married Elsie Irene Wheatley on December 26, 1948, and they had five children, Claudia, Vicki, Dave, Patti, and Steve, before she preceded him in death in March 1971; after receiving his bachelor's degree, he enrolled in his first master's program in fish and wildlife at SIUC, where he was the head of his research team

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1 and taught undergraduate classes in biology; and

2 WHEREAS, After graduation, David Elder and his family
3 moved to Fulton County, where he worked as a coal mine land
4 reclamation design plan administrator for Truax Traer Coal
5 Company; he then taught 8th grade math and science for the
6 Canton school district; he earned his second master's degree
7 in school administration from Western Illinois University in
8 the late 1950s; and

9 WHEREAS, David Elder was asked by the Illinois Education
10 Association (IEA) to advance the cause and employment
11 protection of the State's teachers in Springfield in 1959,
12 becoming a consultant and lobbyist with the state legislature
13 to advance school law and finance legislation; later, he led
14 the IEA's PAC activities; and

15 WHEREAS, In the late 1960s, David Elder was appointed as a
16 school finance and law consultant to assist in the rewriting
17 and updating of the Constitution of the State of Illinois at
18 the 1970 Constitutional Convention, and he also advised on the
19 all-encompassing issue of general revenue; he married Tana
20 Horine on July 1, 1972, and they later moved to a 21-acre home
21 in rural Menard County in 1974 and had one child, Kathy; he
22 continued to serve as a consultant in school law and finance to
23 the state legislature in 1973; and

1 WHEREAS, David Elder returned as a staff member of the
2 Illinois Senate Republicans on the Education Committee in the
3 1980s; he was then appointed as executive director of the
4 State of Illinois School Problems Commission by 1985, where he
5 was tasked by the Illinois State Superintendent of Schools to
6 write legislation to help keep children in Illinois safe from
7 falling through the cracks in the system, leading him to write
8 the bill that created what became the Community and
9 Residential Services Authority (CRSA); his legislation passed
10 nearly unanimously and became a fully funded mandated program
11 whose decision becomes the final say in cases brought before
12 it when dealing with the welfare of individual children; and

13 WHEREAS, During his tenure, David Elder became a
14 sought-after expert in school law and finance who could be
15 trusted and counted on by both Republicans and Democrats to
16 guide them towards making informed decisions and taking
17 objective action on legislation regarding the education and
18 welfare of the children of Illinois; after retiring in 1992,
19 he continued to serve as a consultant for a time; after that,
20 he began cycling every 18 months on and off, per the bylaws he
21 created, as board chairman of the CSRA; and

22 WHEREAS, David Elder served and volunteered wherever he
23 resided; he and Elsie served as Boy Scout leaders; he then

1 helped Tana with Brownies and Girl Scouts, and they were
2 co-founders of Petersburg PATT (Parents and Teachers
3 Together), followed the PORTA High School Scholastic Bowl
4 team, and were involved as PORTA band parents; at some point
5 during the late 1970s to the early 1980s, he and others,
6 including a Supreme Court Justice, met annually with juniors
7 and seniors from Elk Grove High school as part of the Illinois
8 Citizen Experience, where students were brought to Springfield
9 by their teacher, Richard Chierico, to learn about state
10 government; and

11 WHEREAS, David Elder was deeply committed to his faith,
12 and he was a highly active member at every church he attended,
13 including serving as a Sunday school teacher since he was a
14 teenager, a lay leader, a deacon, a church moderator, a choir
15 member, a greeter, a church softball team member, a Bible
16 study leader, and as chairman of a Christian Education
17 Committee; and

18 WHEREAS, David Elder enjoyed golfing, gardening, hunting,
19 and playing pinochle; most of all, he enjoyed visiting with
20 family and friends; and

21 WHEREAS, David Elder was a proud and beloved husband,
22 father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, and he was friend
23 and counselor to many; he will be remembered as a pillar of

1 strength and support for his family and friends; and

2 WHEREAS, David Elder was preceded in death by his first
3 wife, Elsie, and their child, Claudia Lynn; his parents; his
4 sisters, Katherine Jane (the late E.E.) Elder Ballance, Rose
5 (the late Carl) Elder Sellars, and Gracie (the late Dorris)
6 Elder Garner; his niece, Rene Sellars Hileman; his nephew,
7 Danny Balance; and his grandnephews, Jonathan Garner and
8 Elijah Williams; and

9 WHEREAS, David Elder is survived by his wife of 51 years,
10 Tana; his children, Veronica "Vicki" (Robert) Stearmer, David
11 L. "Dave" (the late Janet) Elder, Patricia "Patti" Lewis,
12 Steven "Steve" (Terri) Elder, and Katherine "Kathy" (Mason)
13 Langelier; his brother, Raymond L. (the late Mary) Elder; his
14 sister-in-law, Chris (the late Ernest Ira "Dari") Elder; his
15 grandchildren, Matt (Janille) Stearmer, Brian (Leandra)
16 Stearmer, Jon (Laurel) Stearmer, April Elder, Samantha Elder,
17 Mary Ann (fiance, Doug) Bargas, Becky (Jeremy) Brownfield,
18 Kate Turner, Remi Langelier, and Xage Langelier; 16
19 great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews; therefore,
20 be it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL
22 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
23 David E. Elder and extend our sincere condolences to his

1 family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it
2 further

3 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
4 presented to the family of David Elder as an expression of our
5 deepest sympathy.