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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The members of the House of Representatives of the State of Illinois learned with regret of the death of David Saxner on Thursday, November 23, 2006; and

WHEREAS, He was united in marriage to his wife, Rikke; and

WHEREAS, He shared his commitment, generosity, sensitivity and concern for those behind bars with everyone who knew him; he started teaching a class on law at Stateville in the mid seventies; during this time David became a tireless advocate for the parole of a particular "C#" prisoner, and later expanded his work to support the parole of all C# prisoners; and

WHEREAS, When the Pontiac rebellion happened in 1978, David became a legal worker and political supporter of the 17 Pontiac Brothers charged with death penalty offenses; it was partly through his tireless work that all were eventually acquitted; and

WHEREAS, David developed The Campaign in Support of C# Prisoners to help all prisoners subject to parole (those convicted before 1978, known as "C number prisoners" because of their prison identification numbers); he recruited lawyers to help these prisoners, trained them in how to handle parole hearings, and attended hearings of the Prisoner Review Board in an attempt to open up their process to the public; and

WHEREAS, David encouraged everyone he came into contact with to educate themselves on the plight of C# prisoners, and urged them to join him in the effort to change the law and the practice which had resulted in C# prisoners serving sentences almost twice as long as prisoners with determinate sentences; to this end he tirelessly catalogued the activities of the

1 Illinois Prisoner Review Board; his doggedness played a key
2 role in not only the eventual parole of James Sayles but of
3 many Illinois prisoners languishing behind bars many years
4 after they should have been released; and

5 WHEREAS, To date, David's C# Campaign has succeeded in
6 actively participating in and influencing the release on parole
7 of more than 50 C#'s, facilitating the release from parole of
8 another 40 people, developed a parole training manual for the
9 families and anyone else who could use it, researching, writing,
10 and disseminating a vast amount of literature to the community
11 and educating thousands of people about indeterminate
12 sentencing, parole, the Illinois prison system, and related
13 issues, organizing and training lawyers and law students to
14 take parole cases, have developed a six-hour web site
15 presentation, and a 100-page manual, to train lawyers and law
16 students in this work, regularly attended en banc hearings on
17 parole decision-making held in Springfield-including providing
18 family members and friends with transportation, funds for
19 hotels, etc, setting up Town Hall meetings and other
20 educational events for the community to have contact with
21 representatives of the Governor, Attorney General, State's
22 Attorney, the DOC, PRB, legislators, and others, hosting an
23 annual C# family picnic as well as an annual Christmas
24 fundraiser benefit, developed recommendations relating to
25 parole and the Prisoner Review Board for Governor Rod
26 Blagojevich, assisting prisoners in transferring closer to
27 their families, and intervening in numerous medical cases with
28 success; and

29 WHEREAS, David maintained his humor, sensitivity, and
30 warmth, in everything he did; he walked the walk, not for
31 himself, but for others, especially those incarcerated with
32 whom he felt a bond; and

33 WHEREAS, He was a board member of The John Howard

1 Association of Illinois, and an officer and board member of the
2 Long Term Prisoner Policy Project; he and his wife ran a very
3 successful business, but his happiness came from the charity
4 work he was involved with for many years; and

5 WHEREAS, The passing of David Saxner has been deeply felt
6 by many, especially his wife, Rikke; he was a remarkable
7 husband, father, brother, son, friend, and advocate;
8 therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
10 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
11 we mourn the passing of David Saxner, and we extend our sincere
12 condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew and loved
13 him; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
15 presented to his family as an expression of our deepest
16 sympathy.