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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate and the people of the State of Illinois are losing a man dedicated to making changes in State government, a man who has worked hard for education reform, a man dedicated to helping those less fortunate in the State, and a man who has become a familiar face in Illinois politics; and

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WHEREAS, The Honorable Emil Jones, Jr., has been a member of the Illinois General Assembly since 1973; as a member of the Illinois House of Representatives from 1973 to 1983, he served as an Assistant Democratic Leader and Chairman of the Insurance Committee; and

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WHEREAS, Elected to the Senate in 1982, Senator Jones is currently a member of the Senate Executive Committee; Senator Jones is a strong proponent of social justice, fair and adequate funding of public education in Illinois, and affordable health care for Illinois families; and

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WHEREAS, On January 10, 2007, Emil Jones, Jr. received the unanimous support of the members of the Senate Democratic Caucus to be elected Senate President in the 95th General Assembly, his third term as the Senate's chief presiding officer; Illinois Supreme Court Justice Charles Freeman

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1 administered the oath of office to Senate President Emil Jones,
2 Jr. as his family, friends, and colleagues witnessed the event;
3 the 95th General Assembly marked the first time in 70 years,
4 and the first time since the implementation of the 1970 State
5 Constitution, that Democrats held a veto-proof majority in the
6 Illinois Senate; President Jones' hard work and determination
7 led Senate Democrats to take an unprecedented five additional
8 seats to secure a super-majority, the only chamber in the
9 General Assembly to realize such advances; and

10 WHEREAS, Senator Jones has been a strong supporter of
11 education issues throughout his service in the Illinois General
12 Assembly; as Senate President, Senator Jones passed the largest
13 one-year increase in the foundation level in the history of the
14 State; the \$600 million increase in Fiscal Year 2008 provided
15 an additional \$400 per student in public school funding,
16 bringing the foundation level to \$5,734; President Jones has
17 also been a strong proponent of early childhood education and
18 since 2003 has worked to provide nearly \$200 million to invest
19 in the future of pre-school age children; and

20 WHEREAS, As Senate President, Senator Jones worked to
21 provide and protect the interests of downstate Illinois,
22 including: blocking efforts to repeal the tax break for farmers
23 on feed, seed, and farm chemicals, supporting funds for ethanol
24 plants, clean coal projects, and promoting historic efforts

1 such as the Woodlawn Farm in Morgan County and New Philadelphia
2 in Pike County; and

3 WHEREAS, Under President Jones' leadership, the Illinois
4 General Assembly passed one of the most comprehensive reform
5 measures of the criminal justice system in the history of the
6 State; among the many substantive changes put forward by
7 Senator Jones was the passage of legislation to videotape
8 interrogations in capital cases; the passage of this single
9 piece of legislation put Illinois at the forefront of the
10 nation as the first State to require that interrogations in
11 capital cases be videotaped; and

12 WHEREAS, Other significant legislation that Senator Jones
13 sponsored during his legislative career includes legislation
14 to require State law-enforcement officials to collect data on
15 racial profiling; a bill to require equal pay for equal work; a
16 prescription drug discount program for senior and disabled
17 citizens; two increases in the minimum wage; legislation that
18 directed millions of State dollars for disadvantaged public
19 school students to classroom needs, rather than administrative
20 needs; legislation to double the personal exemption on the
21 State income tax in 1998 to benefit working families who had
22 not received an increase since 1969; prohibited smoking on the
23 floor of the Illinois Senate; and an effort to secure an
24 individual's right to choose a clinical social worker over a

1 psychiatrist; and

2 WHEREAS, For his legislative and community endeavors,
3 Senator Jones has received numerous awards from educational,
4 business, health care, and labor organizations, among others;
5 perhaps the greatest honor being the dedication of the Emil and
6 Patricia A. Jones Convocation Center at Chicago State
7 University; and

8 WHEREAS, Emil Jones is a 1953 graduate of Chicago's Tilden
9 Technical High School; he graduated from Loop Junior College;
10 he attended Roosevelt University, majoring in Business
11 Administration, where he received the Doctorate of Humane
12 Letters Honoris Causa Degree in 2004; Senator Jones received an
13 honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree at Chicago State
14 University for his considerable contributions to public
15 service and promoting greater educational opportunities at
16 Chicago State; and

17 WHEREAS, Senator Jones was the only African-American
18 Senate President in the nation from 2003 to 2007; he is the
19 longest-serving leader of Senate Democrats since the 1970
20 Constitution; in 2004, he was named to the Board of Directors
21 of the Forum of Senate Presidents, an organization of
22 nationwide Senate Presidents in the United States; he also
23 serves on the Board of Directors of the State Legislative

1 Leaders Foundation; and

2 WHEREAS, In 2004, President Jones was inducted into the Phi
3 Theta Kappa International Honor Society of Harold Washington
4 College; he is a life-long resident of Chicago's South Side,
5 and he is a member of Holy Name of Mary Church, the Knights of
6 St. Peter Claver, the National Black Caucus of State
7 Legislators, the National Conference of State Legislators,
8 Board of Directors of the State Legislative Leaders Foundation,
9 and the Shriners; and he is a 33rd degree Mason and a former
10 Boy Scout Master; and

11 WHEREAS, Senator Jones is also a lifesaver; in 2003, while
12 dining out with his wife in a local Springfield restaurant,
13 President Jones noticed a woman at a nearby table who was
14 choking; without hesitation, Senator Jones jumped from his
15 chair and performed the Heimlich maneuver on the woman, saving
16 her life; and

17 WHEREAS, Senator Jones has four children and is married to
18 Dr. Lorrie Jones; his son, Emil Jones III, will soon take his
19 father's seat on the Illinois Senate floor, continuing to
20 represent the people of the State of Illinois; therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL
22 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we congratulate Senate

1 President Emil Jones on his retirement; the Senate floor will
2 be a different place without his stately presence; and he will
3 be sorely missed by his colleagues, constituents, and the
4 people of the State of Illinois; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
6 presented to Senate President Emil Jones as a symbol of our
7 great respect and esteem.