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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 William J. O'Connell Jr. of Peoria, who passed away on September 23, 2012; and

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WHEREAS, William O'Connell Jr. was born on July 23, 1929, in Kewanee; he was the son of William J. O'Connell Sr. and Josephine (Robinson) O'Connell; he married Helen Rose Engel on January 26, 1957, in New Blaine, Arkansas; and

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WHEREAS, William O'Connell Jr. earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Bradley University; and

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WHEREAS, William O'Connell Jr. was a lifelong employee of the Journal Star, where he retired in 1996 as the newspaper's political reporter, covering the Illinois Legislature; he was the author of the newspaper's "Off the Political Grapevine" column; and

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WHEREAS, William O'Connell Jr. was named Illinois Journalist of the Year by Northern Illinois University in 1986; he was the recipient of a national award from the American Political Science Association and was honored by the Associated Press, the Illinois Education Association, and the Illinois Valley Press Club; he also served as president of the Illinois

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1 Legislative Correspondents Association; and

2 WHEREAS, William O'Connell Jr. formed the St. Patrick's
3 Society of Peoria with 4 of his friends in 1980; he was a
4 lifetime member of the organization and remained active as an
5 ex-officio board member; he served as grand marshal of the
6 Peoria St. Patrick's Day Parade in 1996; he was also a founder
7 of the local chapter of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, where
8 he was a member for 23 years and served as president from 1999
9 to 2000; and

10 WHEREAS, William O'Connell Jr. was designated as Hibernian
11 of the Year in 1998 and was given the AOH Appreciation Award in
12 1997 for his work with the Ancient Order of Hibernians; and

13 WHEREAS, William O'Connell Jr. was a dedicated parishioner
14 of St. Bernard's Parish in Peoria, where he served many years
15 as an usher at Sunday services; and

16 WHEREAS, William O'Connell Jr. was preceded in his death by
17 his parents and his son, William Francis O'Connell; and

18 WHEREAS, William O'Connell Jr. is survived by his wife,
19 Helen; his children, Kelly (Dan) Kennelly, Thomas (Linda)
20 O'Connell, Timothy (Anita) O'Connell, Molly (George) Phoenix,
21 and David (Kristi) O'Connell; his 12 grandchildren; and his 3

1 great-grandchildren; therefore, be it

2 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL
3 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
4 his family and friends, the passing of William J. O'Connell
5 Jr.; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
7 presented to the family of William O'Connell Jr. as an
8 expression of our sympathy.