



HR0363

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives wish to congratulate Robert A. Easter on the
4 occasion of his retirement as President of the University of
5 Illinois system, with main campuses in Urbana-Champaign,
6 Chicago, and Springfield and programs that touch nearly every
7 corner of the State of Illinois; and

8 WHEREAS, Robert Easter's distinguished service as the 19th
9 President of the University of Illinois capped a nearly 40-year
10 career at the State's flagship university, a global leader in
11 education and research, and one of the nation's original
12 land-grant universities; and

13 WHEREAS, Robert Easter's long association with the
14 University of Illinois dates back even further, to 1973, when
15 he left his native Texas to begin doctoral studies on the
16 Urbana-Champaign campus after earning a bachelor's degree in
17 agricultural education and a master's in animal nutrition from
18 Texas A & M University, where he earned membership in the Phi
19 Kappa Phi Honor Society; and

20 WHEREAS, Robert Easter completed his doctorate in animal
21 sciences from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in
22 1976, and was immediately hired to begin his academic and

1 research career as an assistant professor in the Department of
2 Animal Sciences, conducting research on and teaching about
3 livestock feeding; and

4 WHEREAS, Robert Easter's teaching excellence earned
5 numerous awards, including the Young Animal Scientist Award for
6 Outstanding Teacher from the Midwest Section of the American
7 Society of Animal Science, along with awards at the
8 departmental and college levels at the University of Illinois
9 at Urbana-Champaign; and

10 WHEREAS, Robert Easter's pioneering research has made him
11 an internationally known expert in livestock feeding; he has
12 participated in lectures, academic programs, and private
13 consulting on swine-related topics across the United States and
14 in 30 foreign countries; and

15 WHEREAS, Robert Easter's scholarship has advanced science,
16 contributing to a book he co-authored on livestock production;
17 he also wrote more than 90 peer-reviewed articles, 11 book
18 chapters, and numerous papers for conferences and industry
19 publications; and

20 WHEREAS, Robert Easter's expertise earned an appointment
21 by President George W. Bush in 2006 to the Board for
22 International Food and Agricultural Development, which advises

1 the United States Agency for International Development on
2 issues relating to food insecurity in developing nations; he
3 also served a term as chair during his service from 2006 to
4 2011; and

5 WHEREAS, Robert Easter's scholarship has earned him
6 membership in prestigious professional societies, including
7 the American Society of Animal Science and the British Society
8 of Animal Science; he was also appointed to serve on the
9 Illinois Council for Food and Agricultural Research, the
10 Illinois Agricultural Leadership Foundation, and the
11 Governor's Committee on China; and

12 WHEREAS, Robert Easter has served the interests of the
13 State of Illinois, the nation, and the world through his
14 agricultural expertise; his contributions have been recognized
15 with the Award in Nonruminant Nutrition Research from the
16 American Society of Animal Sciences, the University of Illinois
17 at Urbana-Champaign College of Agriculture's prestigious Paul
18 A. Funk Award for contributions to Illinois agriculture, the
19 Illinois Pork Producers Industry Spotlight and Industry
20 Service Awards, and the Illinois Farm Bureau Charles Schumann
21 Award, the Farm Bureau's highest honor and given in recognition
22 of lifelong support for agriculture in Illinois and across the
23 nation; and

1 WHEREAS, Robert Easter shared his talents in leadership at
2 the University of Illinois, serving as head of the Department
3 of Animal Sciences from 1996 to 2001; he was also dean of the
4 nationally-ranked College of Agricultural, Consumer, and
5 Environmental Sciences from 2002 to 2009; and

6 WHEREAS, Robert Easter's planned retirement in 2009 marked
7 the beginning of a new chapter in his career that reflects the
8 commitment and loyalty that stand as the hallmark of his
9 service to the University of Illinois and the people of the
10 State; and

11 WHEREAS, Robert Easter delayed his retirement to answer the
12 call when the University of Illinois needed his wisdom and
13 steady hand during difficult times, serving as interim provost
14 and chancellor of the Urbana-Champaign campus from 2009 to
15 2011; he later stepped out of retirement to serve as the 19th
16 President of the University from July of 2012 to May of 2015;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, Robert Easter is the only person in the 148 years
19 since the founding of the University of Illinois to serve in
20 each of those critical leadership roles; and

21 WHEREAS, Under Robert Easter's leadership as President,
22 the University of Illinois has continued its rise as one of the

1 world's premier universities, growing to a record 78,000
2 students across its 3 campuses, awarding more than 20,000
3 degrees annually, and increasing research funding to nearly \$1
4 billion; and

5 WHEREAS, Robert Easter has sought to expand the world-class
6 facilities at the University of Illinois, playing a key role in
7 projects that include the launch of Blue Waters, the fastest
8 supercomputer on any college campus in the world; and

9 WHEREAS, Robert Easter has been a steadfast advocate for
10 the University of Illinois' land-grant mission of student
11 access and affordability, holding tuition increases to their
12 lowest levels in 2 decades during his term as President,
13 including a tuition freeze for incoming, in-state freshmen for
14 the 2015-2016 academic year; and

15 WHEREAS, Robert Easter has been a champion for serving the
16 needs of not only the students but the people of Illinois,
17 seeking to drive progress and economic growth through the
18 University's graduates and the innovation spawned by its
19 research discoveries; and

20 WHEREAS, Robert Easter served his country as an officer in
21 the United States Army Reserve for 2 decades, retiring at the
22 rank of Major; and

1 WHEREAS, During his long, decorated career, Robert Easter
2 has been supported by his loving family, including his wife,
3 Cheryl; a son, Brian; a daughter, Johanna Robinson; his late
4 son, Aaron; and 6 grandchildren, T.J. and Brennan Easter and
5 Katelyn, Andrew, Olivia, and Josie Robinson, with whom he
6 anticipates spending much more of his time; and

7 WHEREAS, Robert Easter embodies the qualities that the
8 University of Illinois seeks to instill in every graduate -
9 wisdom and integrity, leadership, a strong work ethic,
10 respectfulness and thoughtfulness, loyalty and commitment, and
11 deep devotion to serving the people of Illinois and our nation;
12 therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
14 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
15 congratulate Robert A. Easter on the occasion of his retirement
16 and wish him continued success and happiness in the future; and
17 be it further

18 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
19 presented to Robert A. Easter as a symbol of our esteem and
20 respect.