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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The members of the House of Representatives of the State of Illinois recognize the 50th Anniversary of the Freedom Fighters of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution; and

WHEREAS, On October 23, 1956, hundreds of thousands of Hungarians from all walks of life joined university students in a peaceful call for democracy and an end to the brutal and oppressive Soviet-dominated Hungarian communist government; and

WHEREAS, Peaceful protestors were fired upon by the Hungarian Security Police, killing hundreds and triggering the bloody fight for freedom and democracy and the first tear in the Iron Curtain; and

WHEREAS, Millions of Hungarians, students and workers, men, women, and children, would rise up against impossible odds and risk their lives to take part in their noble fight for freedom and democracy; and

WHEREAS, The Hungarian Freedom Fighters, students and workers, men, women, and children, who rose up against impossible odds and risked their lives to take part in their noble fight for freedom and democracy, were able to establish a revolutionary government that released political prisoners, including major church leaders, took steps to create a multi-party democracy, called for the withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Hungary, announced Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, and requested United Nations assistance in establishing neutrality; and

WHEREAS, The Soviet Union launched a massive military counter-offensive against the revolt, sending tens of thousands of additional troops from the Soviet Union, and

1 launched air strikes, artillery bombardments, and coordinated
2 tank-infantry actions involving some 6,000 tanks which,
3 remarkably, the outnumbered and under-equipped Hungarian Army
4 and Hungarian Freedom Fighters resisted for several days; and

5 WHEREAS, Prime Minister Imre Nagy was seized by Soviet
6 security forces, despite assurances of safe passage for him to
7 leave the Yugoslav Embassy of Budapest where he sought asylum,
8 and was taken to Rumania and subsequently tried and executed;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Thousands of Hungarians were tortured, tried, and
11 executed by the post-1956 Hungarian government; and

12 WHEREAS, More than 200,000 Hungarians fled their country in
13 the aftermath of the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian
14 uprising, and over 47,000 of these people eventually were able
15 to settle in the United States, where they have contributed
16 greatly to the intellectual strength, cultural diversity, and
17 the economic might of the country; and

18 WHEREAS, The uprising of the Hungarian people in 1956
19 dramatically confirmed the widespread contempt in which the
20 Hungarians held the Soviet Union, the underlying weakness of
21 the communist system imposed by Soviet authorities in Central
22 and Eastern Europe, and the strength of popular support for
23 democratic principles and the right of the Hungarian people to
24 determine their own national destiny; and

25 WHEREAS, The 1956 Hungarian Revolution unmasked the true
26 nature of the Soviet system, contributing to the disintegration
27 of communist parties in the West and across the globe; and

28 WHEREAS, The Hungarians, in 1989, dismantled the Iron
29 Curtain and permitted East Germans safe passage to the West,
30 actions that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall; and

1 WHEREAS, On October 23, 1989, the Republic of Hungary
2 proclaimed its independence, and in 1990, the Hungarian
3 Parliament officially designated October 23 as a Hungarian
4 national holiday, indicating that the legacy of the 1956
5 Revolution continues to inspire Hungarians to this day; and

6 WHEREAS, On March 12, 1999, the Government of Hungary,
7 reflecting the will of the Hungarian people, formally acceded
8 to the North Atlantic Treaty and became a member of NATO, and
9 on May 1, 2004, Hungary became a full member of the European
10 Union; therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
12 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
13 we proclaim October 23, 2006, as Hungarian Freedom Fighters Day
14 in Illinois; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
16 presented to Mr. Michael Clements.