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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 Zachary VanderGriend of Aurora, who passed away on September 1, 2008; and

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WHEREAS, Zachary was born in Sunnyside, Washington and then moved to Lynden, Washington for a short time; his family then relocated to Yakima, Washington where Zach attended WestSide Christian School through 5th grade; during 5th grade, his family again moved, this time to Aurora; Zachary attended Aurora Christian School through his sophomore year and then received his education through Christian Liberty Academy in Arlington Heights, at the same time earning his private pilot's license, attending Waubonsee Community College, working for Shodeen Flight Department and Dick Hansen as an aircraft detailer, and for Lumanair as a lineman, all at Aurora Airport; and

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WHEREAS, Zach attended Moody Bible Institute and was accepted into their flight program in Spokane, Washington and partnered with Spokane Community College; it was there and at Blue Sky Arrow in Morris that Zach received his Airframe and Powerplant mechanic's license; he worked as a lineman at Felts Field in Spokane during his time there; Zach then moved to Omaha, Nebraska where he attended Grace University and

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1 graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in the Aviation
2 Pilot/Business Program; and

3 WHEREAS, During summer breaks, Zach worked at Blue Sky
4 Arrow in Morris and at Lumanair in Aurora as an A & P mechanic;
5 after receiving his degree, Zach worked for a short time at the
6 Tacoma Narrows airport as an A & P mechanic for Associated
7 Aviation; he moved to Missoula, Montana on May 26, 2008 to
8 begin his dream job with Neptune Aviation; Zach wanted to fly
9 and become a Missionary Pilot and expressed his desire at the
10 age of two; and

11 WHEREAS, After moving to Illinois, Zach was involved in
12 museum work as a docent, detailer, and aircraft restorer; Zach
13 then became acquainted with EAA 579 and their Young Eagle
14 program; he spent many hours volunteering and began giving
15 Young Eagle rides as soon as he obtained his license; the
16 people at 579 made it possible for Zach to earn his pilot's
17 license; Zach was awarded a scholarship to attend the EAA's Air
18 Academy in Oshkosh, Wisconsin; he was awarded the Presidential
19 Youth Service Award and received it at the unveiling of the
20 Butch O'Hare Memorial at O'Hare Airport, an aircraft Zach
21 helped restore; He was given the first ever Eagle award by EAA
22 579; and

23 WHEREAS, Zach loved life and was passionate about his faith

1 in Jesus Christ; he loved his family and adored his little
2 sister; he enjoyed working, whether it was restoring a car or
3 an airplane; Zach loved to "turn wrenches" and get his hands
4 dirty; he loved to travel, fish, hunt, read, ski, and he always
5 enjoyed a good laugh; he also played piano and acted in local
6 church productions; he loved to fly because it was there he
7 felt closest to God; Zach was compassionate and generous to a
8 fault, he was loyal, energetic, and he was loved; and

9 WHEREAS, Zach was preceded in death by his grandfather,
10 Jake Gortsema; and

11 WHEREAS, Zachary will be greatly missed by his parents,
12 Steve and Marci; his very special friend and sister, Andriana;
13 his sweetheart, Ashley Hutton; his "Nan", Grace Gortsema; his
14 grandparents, Mick and LenaMarie VanderGriend; the many aunts,
15 uncles, cousins, friends, and people he called family: Dick and
16 RuthAnn Miller, Steve and Linda Valentine, Joe Cassidy, and
17 Heather and Melody; he will also be missed by his family at
18 Neptune Aviation, and his Crew Chief Robert; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL
20 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
21 his family and friends, the passing of Zachary VanderGriend;
22 and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
2 presented to the family of Zachary VanderGriend as a symbol of
3 our sincere sympathy.