



HR0285

LRB104 13361 LAW 25667 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Charles
4 A. "Chuck" Hartke, former State Representative and Director of
5 the Illinois Department of Agriculture, who passed away on
6 April 13, 2025; and

7 WHEREAS, Chuck Hartke was born to Alphonse and Sophia
8 Hartke in Effingham on May 7, 1944; he graduated from
9 Teutopolis High School in 1962, and he remained a devoted fan
10 of the Wooden Shoes for the rest of his life, particularly
11 during the time his granddaughters, Madeline and Anna, were
12 stars of the girls basketball team; and

13 WHEREAS, Chuck Hartke married his high school sweetheart,
14 Kathryn L. Hoene, on August 10, 1963, and their union produced
15 two children, Christopher and Kimberly, and six grandchildren,
16 Ryan, Rachael, Jaelen, Madeline, Anna, and Jack, before she
17 preceded him in death on November 1, 2012; he was blessed
18 thereafter in finding a second soulmate in his fiancée, Brenda
19 Holmes, who herself became a member of the extended Hartke
20 family; and

21 WHEREAS, Chuck Hartke, having answered the call of the
22 draft, served in the U.S. Army from 1966 to 1968 during the

1 Vietnam War; he was stationed in Quang Tri, Vietnam, where he
2 served as a field medic and ascended to the rank of an E-5
3 sergeant to oversee triage operations as part of a highly
4 trained MASH unit; and

5 WHEREAS, After his military service in Vietnam, Chuck
6 Hartke returned to Teutopolis in Effingham County to tend to
7 his growing farmstead and young family, becoming a skilled
8 farmer; he produced corn and soybeans, and he also managed
9 livestock, raising swine and sheep; and

10 WHEREAS, Chuck Hartke secured an appointment on the
11 Effingham County Board in 1971, representing the start of his
12 career in public office, and he served on the board until 1974;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Chuck Hartke earned appointment to the Illinois
15 House of Representatives in January 1985, where he served with
16 distinction for nine terms and was named Assistant Majority
17 Leader in 1997, a position he held throughout the remainder of
18 his time in the House; and

19 WHEREAS, During his time as a State Representative, Chuck
20 Hartke sponsored a total of 55 bills, serving as the primary
21 sponsor of 28 of them, and became known for his expertise on
22 agriculture policy, his record of securing support for

1 infrastructure projects and programs to benefit his downstate
2 legislative district, and his ability to reach across the
3 aisle and find consensus on a wide range of issues; and

4 WHEREAS, Following his tenure in the House, Chuck Hartke
5 was appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Illinois
6 Senate to serve as Director of the Illinois Department of
7 Agriculture, a position he held from 2003 until his retirement
8 from public service in 2008; he was regarded as a
9 highly-visible and respected farmer-director and an effective
10 advocate for all farmers and agricultural interests in the
11 State; and

12 WHEREAS, In retirement, Chuck Hartke became an
13 accomplished gardener, having constructed a large tropical
14 greenhouse on his farm, and he happily gave away his flowers
15 and vegetables to folks in and around Teutopolis and at the
16 State Capitol in Springfield; during this time, he especially
17 loved spending time with Brenda, thoroughly enjoying their
18 many traveling adventures and treasured times with family and
19 friends; and

20 WHEREAS, Chuck Hartke published a series of essays on his
21 life in 2022 titled, A Farm Boy's Journey Into Politics, which
22 chronicles a varied and well-lived life, reflecting his
23 indomitable positive spirit and ever-present good humor; and

1 WHEREAS, Chuck Hartke was a devoted family man and farmer,
2 and he will be remembered for his substantial record of
3 service to his community, State, and nation; and

4 WHEREAS, Chuck Hartke is survived by his fiancée, Brenda;
5 his son, Christopher (Beth) Hartke; his daughter, Kimberly
6 (Patrick) Deters; his grandchildren, Ryan Deters, Rachael
7 (Curtis) Meuth, Jaelen (Rodrigo) Deters-Camargo, Madeline
8 (Jordan) Ratermann, Anna (Mark) Wendell, and Jack Hartke; and
9 his great-grandson, Luke Wendell; therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
11 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
12 we mourn the passing of Charles A. "Chuck" Hartke, former
13 State Representative and Director of the Illinois Department
14 of Agriculture, and extend our sincere condolences to his
15 family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it
16 further

17 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
18 presented to the family of Chuck Hartke as an expression of our
19 deepest sympathy.