



HR0585

LRB104 16926 MST 30340 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Debra Thompson, a beloved community activist, organizer, mentor, volunteer, and true pillar of the Greater Englewood community of Chicago, whose life of service leaves an enduring legacy of leadership, compassion, and neighborhood empowerment; and

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WHEREAS, Debra Thompson was born and raised in the Greater Englewood community, residing on the same block since the age of one in a beautiful greystone flat that symbolized her deep roots, lifelong stability, and unwavering commitment to the people and place she proudly called home; and

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WHEREAS, Debra Thompson was a devoted mother to her son, Daniel, and a loving grandmother to her granddaughter, Anilyah, and her family was the heart of her purpose, grounding her work in love, pride, and generational strength; and

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WHEREAS, Debra Thompson dedicated over 30 years of professional service to MCI/Verizon, retiring as a senior maintenance technician, specializing in Nortel Digital Multiplex System equipment, an accomplishment that reflected her technical excellence, perseverance, and trailblazing role

1 as a woman in a highly skilled field; and

2 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson's commitment to public service
3 extended far beyond her professional career, as she devoted
4 countless hours to community advocacy and volunteerism,
5 including faithful service as a volunteer with the Office of
6 State Representative Sonya M. Harper, where she offered her
7 time, insight, and steadfast dedication to serving the
8 residents of the 6th District; and

9 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson was widely regarded as a role
10 model, mentor, and trusted guide to young activists, community
11 organizers, and emerging political leaders, generously sharing
12 her lived experience, institutional knowledge, and unwavering
13 encouragement with those seeking to serve with integrity and
14 purpose; and

15 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson believed deeply in
16 intergenerational leadership and intentionally creating space
17 for younger voices to be heard, nurtured, and empowered; and

18 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson, through her mentorship and
19 everyday presence, helped shape and strengthen local
20 leadership pipelines in Greater Englewood, leaving a lasting
21 imprint on individuals who continue to serve as advocates,
22 organizers, and public servants; and

1 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson served as president of the 65th &
2 Peoria Street Block Club, an organization originally formed by
3 her parents and fellow property owners in the 1960s, and as a
4 second-generation leader, she resurrected and revitalized the
5 block club in 2002, ensuring its continued strength and
6 relevance; and

7 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson led numerous neighborhood
8 projects, addressing abandoned buildings, health and wellness
9 initiatives, senior safety, and access to community resources,
10 always centering dignity, safety, and collective
11 responsibility; and

12 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson was actively involved in a wide
13 range of community initiatives, including the Midnight Circus
14 fundraiser for Ogden Park, summer youth programming,
15 back-to-school block parties, book donation drives, and other
16 efforts designed to uplift children, families, and seniors
17 throughout Greater Englewood; and

18 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson served as president of the
19 Southwest Federation of Greater Englewood Block Clubs,
20 organizing workshops on landlord-tenant rights, home buying
21 and repair, estate planning, and building sustainable block
22 clubs, thereby strengthening civic participation and resident

1 leadership across neighborhoods; and

2 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson was a fierce and compassionate
3 advocate for seniors, consistently elevating the voices,
4 dignity, and needs of older adults and recognizing seniors as
5 the backbone, historians, and stabilizers of the Greater
6 Englewood community; and

7 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson served as chairperson of the
8 Age-Friendly Englewood Village, a City of Chicago initiative
9 focused on helping seniors and people with disabilities age
10 safely and with dignity in their homes and community,
11 spearheading efforts around housing stability, accessibility,
12 transportation, health, and social connection; and

13 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson further demonstrated visionary
14 leadership as chairperson of the Age-Friendly Dementia
15 Englewood Village, courageously addressing the growing
16 challenges faced by individuals living with dementia and their
17 caregivers through education, advocacy, and community-based
18 support; and

19 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson, as Founder of the See Me
20 organization, developed in collaboration with Chicago Cares,
21 created Cafe 65', a senior-centered activity and information
22 program that reduced isolation, fostered connection, and

1 expanded access to critical resources for older residents; and

2 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson's commitment to lifelong learning
3 was reflected in her educational achievements, which included
4 graduation from St. Thomas the Apostle High School in 1973,
5 earning an Associate of Arts in Teaching-Elementary from Loop
6 College (now Harold Washington College) in 1977, and obtaining
7 an Associate in Applied Science in Electronics from
8 Olive-Harvey College in 1981; and

9 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson's extraordinary service was
10 recognized through numerous honors and awards, including the
11 Whole Cities Healthy Eating Award for the Greater Englewood
12 Community Bucket Garden, the Herstory Award during Women's
13 History Month, the Senior on the Move Award, and multiple
14 appreciation awards for community contributions; and

15 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson was further honored with the 2018
16 Senior of the Year Award and Distinguished Service Award from
17 the 20th Ward Alderman, recognized by the 7th District Chicago
18 Police Department CAPS Unit, and received the Sister Thea
19 Bowman Humanitarian Award, Sister of a Struggle: Women of
20 Change Award, Ladies of Excellence Award for Women Who Live on
21 Purpose and the Floyd McGee Community Hero Award from the Rush
22 Alzheimer's Disease Center; and

1 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson was recognized by the Cradle to
2 Success Coalition for her unwavering support and dedication to
3 community uplift; and

4 WHEREAS, Debra Thompson embodied the very best of civic
5 leadership rooted in service, guided by love for community,
6 and committed to lifting others, ensuring that neighbors,
7 seniors, and future leaders alike were seen, heard, and
8 supported; therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
10 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
11 we mourn the passing of Debra Thompson and extend our sincere
12 condolences to her family, friends, and all who knew and loved
13 her; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
15 presented to the family of Debra Thompson as a symbol of our
16 deepest sympathy.