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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate wish to recognize Reginald Edwin Petty on his service as a trailblazing advocate for civil rights; and

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WHEREAS, Reginald Petty, who hails from East St. Louis, earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in sociology and secondary education from Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 1956 and 1963, respectively; and

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WHEREAS, Reginald Petty became an activist in the 1960s; he joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), where he worked alongside civil rights icons John Lewis and Dick Gregory, and he was arrested more than 30 times while registering Black voters in the Deep South, evidence of his profound commitment to justice and civil rights; and

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WHEREAS, Reginald Petty's impact expanded on a global level when he was recruited by Sargent Shriver to join the Peace Corps in 1966; he became one of its first African American country directors, and he served in the Republic of Upper Volta, known today as Burkina Faso, Swaziland, Kenya, and the Seychelles; his work in these newly independent nations helped establish sustainable development, education programs, and cross-cultural understanding; and

1 WHEREAS, Reginald Petty has held numerous U.S.
2 Presidential appointments, including executive director of the
3 National Advisory Council on Vocational Education
4 (N.A.C.V.E.), regional director of VISTA's Region II, which
5 included New York, New Jersey, and the Virgin Islands,
6 executive director of the African Development Foundation, and
7 director of the National Research Center; as director of
8 research for both N.A.C.V.E. and Westinghouse Learning
9 Corporation, he published a national vocational education
10 study that spanned three years of data; and

11 WHEREAS, Reginald Petty, as a passionate educator and
12 researcher, has continued sharing his knowledge with schools
13 and communities, often through his extensive collection of
14 African art; his collection has been featured at SIU's
15 University Museum in 2002 and 2020, serving as educational
16 tools to bridge African and African American heritage; and

17 WHEREAS, Reginald Petty has focused on local
18 revitalization since his return to East St. Louis, and he has
19 led the Local Neighborhood Opportunity program and the
20 preservation of the city's history; he co-authored *Legendary*
21 *East St. Louisans: An African American Series*, which honors
22 hometown heroes such as Miles Davis and Jackie Joyner-Kersey,
23 and he rescued thousands of books from a closed library to

1 safeguard access to knowledge for future generations; and

2 WHEREAS, Reginald Petty still advocates for justice; at a
3 2020 Black Lives Matter rally, he inspired young activists
4 from his wheelchair with a megaphone in hand, reminding them
5 that the fight for justice is a relay and the baton must be
6 passed; as the founder of the East St. Louis Historical
7 Society, he led a re-enactment of the 1917 NAACP Silent
8 Protest Parade with local citizens on the event's 107th
9 anniversary in 2024; and

10 WHEREAS, Reginald Petty and his life's work of advocating
11 for civil rights is the subject of the 2022 book, The Pandemic
12 Prophet - The Legacy of Reginald E. Petty; and

13 WHEREAS, Reginald Petty is the husband of Edna
14 Patterson-Petty, the father of Anthony, Joel, and Amina Petty,
15 and the grandfather of several; and

16 WHEREAS, Reginald Petty's legacy is one of relentless
17 service, intellectual excellence, and transformational
18 leadership; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL
20 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we recognize Reginald
21 Edwin Petty on his service as a trailblazing advocate for

1 civil rights, and we wish him continued success in his
2 endeavors; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
4 presented to Reginald Petty as an expression of our esteem and
5 respect.