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LRB104 21701 LAW 37294 r

1 SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened
3 to learn of the death of longtime Chicago community organizer
4 Amisha Patel, who passed away on April 24, 2026; and

5 WHEREAS, Amisha Patel, the daughter of Kusum Patel and
6 Arvind Patel, was born in Chicago on May 30, 1975; she earned
7 her Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from Stanford University
8 in 1997, where she co-founded Youth United for Community
9 Action, an organization of young people of color who fought
10 for environmental and social justice in East Palo Alto,
11 California; she married Neena Hemmady at the Chicago Teachers
12 Union Jackie Vaughn Hall in August 2019; and

13 WHEREAS, Amisha Patel began her lifelong work as an
14 organizer through supporting young people in the late 1990s by
15 creating an award-winning documentary directed by the ACVPC
16 Video Team titled Young Azns Rising! Breaking Down Violence
17 Against Women, which was screened at film festivals across the
18 United States and won the Best Documentary category at
19 aMedia's annual Ammy Awards in 2000; her subsequent work as an
20 organizer included projects aimed at combating violence
21 against women and transforming Chicago for working people; and

22 WHEREAS, Amisha Patel's professional accomplishments

1 included serving as a community coordinator for SEIU Local 73
2 in Chicago for six years, where she organized hospital
3 employees and Head Start workers into forming a union, and
4 supporting other community organizers in their fight to stop
5 school closures; in 2007, she became executive director for
6 Grassroots Collaborative, a community-labor coalition that
7 builds power with working families to ensure fully funded
8 public education, critical services, and affordable housing;
9 during her 15-year tenure, she brought big changes to the
10 organization, including bringing an unwavering commitment to
11 racial and economic justice, enabling members to build
12 relationships across organizational lines, and creating a new
13 dynamic in the organization that attracted more participants
14 and made more of an impact; and

15 WHEREAS, Amisha Patel served as a senior advisor for
16 Chicago Mayor-Elect Brandon Johnson's transition committee in
17 2023, and she also worked on the campaigns of various other
18 progressive candidates for public office as well as community
19 and labor campaigns; she co-founded the United Working
20 Families independent political organization, whose goal is to
21 elect more progressives from Chicago to local, state, and
22 national offices, with candidates including Mayor Johnson and
23 U.S. House Representative Delia Ramirez; she also wrote
24 editorials for Crain's Chicago Business, Bill Moyers, In These
25 Times, and Chicago Sun-Times; and

1 WHEREAS, Amisha Patel trained thousands of Illinois
2 residents on race, class, and gender issues while fighting for
3 empowering young workers, increasing the minimum wage, and
4 ensuring that TIF money was used for community improvements
5 and education; she organized until her passing, working with a
6 broad-based national coalition to fight authoritarianism and
7 working against the terror that United States Immigration and
8 Customs Enforcement (ICE) was inflicting in Chicago; and

9 WHEREAS, Amisha Patel was a fiercely brilliant leader,
10 visionary, and friend who was generous with resources, her
11 time, her mental capacity, her energy, and most of all, her
12 love; she forever changed the City of Chicago, the State of
13 Illinois, and the world through her work as an organizer; her
14 legacy will continue through the Amisha Patel Arts &
15 Organizing Fellowship, a new program established to help
16 support artists who make art for social justice-focused
17 grassroots movements; and

18 WHEREAS, Amisha Patel was preceded in death by her father;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, Amisha Patel is survived by her wife; her mother;
21 her children, Ayush Hemmady-Wright and Varsha Hemmady-Wright;
22 her brothers, Nitin (Weiwen) Hemmady and Amit (Vaishali)

1 Patel; her nibblings, Vishal Patel, Meridith Embry, Sahil
2 Patel, and Anishi Patel; and countless chosen family members
3 and friends; therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL
5 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
6 longtime Chicago community organizer Amisha Patel and extend
7 our sincere condolences to her family, friends, and all who
8 knew and loved her; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
10 presented to the family of Amisha Patel as an expression of our
11 deepest sympathy.