



SR0824

LRB101 15224 MST 64729 r

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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 Robert "Bob" Vondrasek on April 19, 2019 at the age of 81; and

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WHEREAS, Bob Vondrasek was born on October 13, 1937 to Mildred and Emil Vondrasek; he was a fervent community organizer in the South Austin neighborhood for four decades, where he fought banks and utility companies, city hall and Springfield, and poverty and injustice; he made a lot of friends, from poor single moms living in unheated apartments to powerful politicians who respected his ability to challenge establishment; and

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WHEREAS, Bob Vondrasek was not afraid of color barriers when it came to social justice; known for integrating himself into the Austin community, he would knock on doors, asking people what they needed and getting their gas and lights turned on; and

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WHEREAS, Bob Vondrasek was best known for helping create state and national programs that provide financial assistance to families whose heat had been cut off; he made programs part of the national scene and was a constant in Washington, D.C., advocating for community reinvestment; and

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1           WHEREAS, As executive director, Bob Vondrasek led the South  
2 Austin Coalition Community Council (SACCC) group to their  
3 signature accomplishment, the Low Income Home Energy  
4 Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which helps low-income families  
5 pay for their energy bills, various energy-related home  
6 repairs, and the weatherization of their homes; and

7           WHEREAS, Through Bob Vondrasek's leadership, SACCC became  
8 known as the top grassroots community organization in the  
9 Chicago area; he was a great strategist and helped lead  
10 community reinvestment, organized senior citizens, and through  
11 the SACCC, kept the Austin Bank on its best behavior; he united  
12 block clubs and motivated people to join local school councils  
13 and churches to open their doors for community meetings; and

14           WHEREAS, Bob Vondrasek retired from his leadership  
15 position with the SACCC due to illness, and during an  
16 appreciation ceremony at the Austin Satellite Senior Center,  
17 community leaders from all over the West Side praised his  
18 community involvement; and

19           WHEREAS, Bob Vondrasek was known for being the most  
20 well-trained, creative, dedicated, and consistent organizer;  
21 he was so dedicated to the cause that he once walked in  
22 95-degree heat from a satellite center to go to a community

1 meeting on the West Side; in a tribute delivered in the U.S.  
2 House of Representatives in 2018, Congressman Danny Davis  
3 described Robert as "the most dedicated, committed and most  
4 loyal Saul Alinsky-trained organizer that I have ever known";  
5 and

6 WHEREAS, Bob Vondrasek loved a good protest; if the cause  
7 was just, he would be there at the drop of a hat to lend his  
8 voice, and he might bring a busload of his friends; he lifted  
9 spirits and taught people how to love, how to live, and how to  
10 work together; and

11 WHEREAS, Bob Vondrasek was married to Alice (Kerley) for  
12 almost 60 years; and

13 WHEREAS, Bob Vondrasek was preceded in death by his sister,  
14 Marianne Cosgrove, and his son, John Vondrasek; and

15 WHEREAS, Bob Vondrasek is survived by his wife, Alice; his  
16 children, Elizabeth, Thomas, and James (Laura); his  
17 grandchildren, Alyssa, Brian, Evan, John, Desi, and Mia; his  
18 great-grandchildren, Ethan and Emily; and his nieces and  
19 nephews, Jack, Julie, Rocky, Mike, and Jana; therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL  
21 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of

1 Robert "Bob" Vondrasek and extend our sincere condolences to  
2 his family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it  
3 further

4       RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
5 presented to the family of Bob Vondrasek as an expression of  
6 our deepest sympathy.