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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, It is highly fitting that the Illinois General Assembly pay respect to the life of former Illinois State Senator John Benjamin "Jack" Roe III by honoring him with a memorial overpass on Rochelle State Route 251; and

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WHEREAS, Sen. Roe's family has a long history of service to the State of Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, Sen. Roe's great-grandfather, Dr. John Roe, was born near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1800 and moved to Ogle County in 1836; he was the first doctor in the Rock River Valley; he established a farm and medical practice on a hill, which later became known as "Lighthouse Point" because Dr. Roe and his wife kept a light burning in a window as a beacon so that all knew how to find the doctor; that land now houses the Lighthouse Church and Cemetery and was donated by the Roe family; and

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WHEREAS, Sen. Roe was born to Jane Gilbert and John B. Roe II on November 21, 1942; he graduated from Oregon Community High School in 1960 and Center College in Danville, Kentucky in 1964 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and History; and

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1 WHEREAS, Sen. Roe attended the University of Illinois,
2 where he graduated from law school in 1967 and began his
3 practice of law in Ogle County; he served as a public defender
4 for the county and was then elected the youngest state's
5 attorney in Illinois in 1968; and

6 WHEREAS, Sen. Roe was elected State Senator of the 35th
7 District of Illinois in 1972 and was the first freshman
8 senator to be appointed to the Committee of Committees; he
9 also served on the Legislative Investigative Commission; and

10 WHEREAS, Sen. Roe sponsored the Illinois Campaign
11 Disclosure Act, requiring candidates for public office to
12 disclose their contributors and their expenditures; and

13 WHEREAS, Sen. Roe sponsored and passed legislation that
14 appropriated the necessary funds for the first leg of the
15 North-South Freeway from Rockford to the west tollway
16 extension of Rochelle and legislation allocating money for the
17 U.S. 20 Freeway Bypass system to be built from Lena to east of
18 Freeport; and

19 WHEREAS, In 1976, Sen. Roe was approached by Robert "Bob"
20 Hultgren, a local businessman and entrepreneur, and Mayor Bill
21 Cipolla to obtain assistance and funding to place an overpass
22 on then U.S. Route 51 through Rochelle; at that time, U.S.

1 Route 51 was the major north-south thoroughfare through the
2 state; Rochelle had two sets of railroad tracks, the Chicago
3 Northwestern and Burlington Northern; as many as 80 trains a
4 day went through Rochelle, creating delays of 15 to 20 minutes
5 for each train; the city had become known as Jamtown and
6 Delaysville by truckers; and

7 WHEREAS, Sen. Roe obtained the money necessary to
8 construct the Rochelle overpass; and

9 WHEREAS, Sen. Roe was appointed Chief Justice of the
10 Illinois Court of Claims by Governor Jim Thompson in 1979; he
11 was a member of the Rochelle Grade School Board of District 230
12 from 1982 to 1984; and

13 WHEREAS, Sen. Roe practiced law in Rochelle from 1973 to
14 1995; he was appointed a circuit judge in 1995 by the Illinois
15 Supreme Court and was elected as a circuit judge in 1996; and

16 WHEREAS, Sen. Roe retired as a judge in 2000 and was a
17 member of the Governor's Commission to Revise and Rewrite The
18 Illinois Criminal Code; he was also a member of the board of
19 the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum and served
20 on the faculty at Stetson University College of Law in St.
21 Petersburg, Florida as an adjunct professor; he was a
22 Certified Florida County Circuit and Family Mediator and a

1 Certified Mediator of the U.S. District Court Middle District
2 of Florida and U.S. District Court Northern District of
3 Illinois; he was a Florida Bar Association arbitrator and
4 mediator and was a certified mediator and arbitrator of the
5 12th Circuit of Florida and the 15th Circuit of Illinois; he
6 was a Manatee County Florida administration hearing officer
7 and was an arbitrator for the New York and Nasdaq Stock
8 Exchanges; and

9 WHEREAS, Sen. Roe was preceded in death by his parents;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, At the time of his passing, Sen. Roe was survived
12 by his wife of 47 years, Phyllis, who was his companion, love,
13 best friend, and caretaker; his son, John B. "Ben" (Irene) Roe
14 IV; his stepdaughter, Julie (Jim) Watt; his grandchildren,
15 John Benjamin Roe V, Mary Margaret Roe, Justin Watt, and Emma
16 Watt; his sister, Ruth Roe Arth; and many nieces and nephews
17 and extended family members; and

18 WHEREAS, Without the leadership, statesmanship, and
19 perseverance of Sen. Roe, the Rochelle overpass would not have
20 been built; therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL
22 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF

1 REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING HEREIN, that we designate the
2 Rochelle State Route 251 overpass as the "Sen. John B. "Jack"
3 Roe Overpass"; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That the Illinois Department of Transportation
5 is requested to erect at suitable locations, consistent with
6 State and federal highway regulations, appropriate plaques or
7 signs giving notice of the name of the "Sen. John B. "Jack" Roe
8 Overpass"; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
10 presented to the family of Sen. Roe, the Secretary of the
11 Illinois Department of Transportation, and the Mayor of City
12 of Rochelle.