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SENATE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Rick Winkel has represented the citizens of east central Illinois with distinction in the General Assembly for 12 years; and

WHEREAS, He was elected to the 52nd Senate District in 2002, having served with honor in the House of Representatives from 1995 to 2002; and

WHEREAS, In the House, he served as a member on legislative committees dealing with agriculture and conservation, education, and judiciary issues; and

WHEREAS, During that time, he sponsored bills that created and provided funds for alternative schooling, reformed campaign finance, and secured a student trustee vote on the University Board of Trustees; and

WHEREAS, He helped school districts maintain a safe environment for students by sponsoring the 1995 Safe Schools Law to provide Illinois with the Regional Safe Schools Program, a system of alternative education programs for disruptive students in grades six through twelve; and

WHEREAS, He also sponsored the 2001 Alternative Opportunities Learning Program, to provide at-risk students with the education and support services needed to meet Illinois Learning Standards and to complete their education in an orderly, safe and secure environment; and

WHEREAS, Senator Winkel has been a leader in addressing education funding reform for elementary and secondary schools, and for public colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, In 2005, he sponsored education funding reform

1 legislation that would provide more dollars for schools, a  
2 significant reduction in local property taxes, and a more  
3 equitable source of revenue for schools at all levels; and

4 WHEREAS, A strong advocate for colleges and universities,  
5 Senator Winkel went to bat for universities when higher  
6 education funding was slashed by the current administration;  
7 and

8 WHEREAS, He and several of his Senate Republican colleagues  
9 traveled throughout the State in 2003 to meet with university  
10 officials, faculty and students to determine the effects of  
11 those deep funding cuts; and

12 WHEREAS, He has been proud to represent the University of  
13 Illinois and its tradition of academic, research and sports  
14 excellence; and

15 WHEREAS, Rick became a lawmaker to make the State of  
16 Illinois a better place to live, he brought State government  
17 from the marble halls of the Capitol to the communities and  
18 citizens of east central Illinois; and

19 WHEREAS, His priorities in Springfield have always been  
20 those of the people he represents; and

21 WHEREAS, To keep in close contact and communication with  
22 his constituents, he maintained a daunting schedule of mobile  
23 office hours in communities of all sizes throughout east  
24 central Illinois; and

25 WHEREAS, He sponsored legislation to give citizens more  
26 information about the effects that population growth,  
27 factories, businesses, and farms have on their water supplies;  
28 and

1           WHEREAS, Rick effectively argued on behalf of his  
2 constituents when the administration tried unsuccessfully in  
3 April 2004 to drop Urbana-based Health Alliance as a managed  
4 care insurance provider for State workers; and

5           WHEREAS, In 2005 he hosted public forums in Danville and  
6 Urbana to give public policy makers the opportunity to hear  
7 firsthand from local doctors and other medical professionals  
8 about the impact that skyrocketing medical malpractice  
9 insurance rates are having on physicians and patients in east  
10 central Illinois; and

11           WHEREAS, He sponsored legislation making it possible for a  
12 group of local schools to form a cooperative high school with  
13 local voter approval; and

14           WHEREAS, He helped create a State version of the federal  
15 AgrAbility Project, which helps older farmers and those with  
16 disabling injuries remain active and productive; and

17           WHEREAS, He called the agriculture community to action in  
18 2004 to fight the Administrations plans to increase taxes on  
19 agriculture products, gut the Department of Agriculture,  
20 eliminate the C-FAR agricultural research program, and  
21 threaten funding for the horse-racing industry; and

22           WHEREAS, He sponsored legislation that would have  
23 reimbursed local governments and businesses for the  
24 approximately \$18 million they paid in sharply increased sewer  
25 permit fees passed by the Democrat-controlled Legislature as  
26 part of the Fiscal Year 2004 budget; and

27           WHEREAS, In the Senate, he served as Republican Spokesman  
28 for the Senate Higher Education Committee, was a member of the  
29 Senate Education Committee, Senate Judiciary Committee, and  
30 Senate Agriculture Committee; and

1           WHEREAS, The Senator has received numerous awards and  
2 honors for his legislative work by groups as varied as the  
3 Illinois Farm Bureau, the Associated Fire Fighters of Illinois,  
4 the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of  
5 Schools, National Federation of Independent Business,  
6 Champaign County Corn Growers, and other local organizations;  
7 and

8           WHEREAS, He was a Champaign County Board Member from 1992  
9 to 1994; and

10           WHEREAS, Senator Winkel is a member of the Champaign County  
11 Chamber of Commerce, Champaign County and Vermilion County Farm  
12 Bureaus, Campaign County Illini Club, Champaign County  
13 Pheasants Forever, Grand Prairie Friends of Illinois, Kiwanis  
14 Club of Champaign-Urbana, Mahomet Aquifer Consortium, Rantoul  
15 Chamber of Commerce, St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce, Technology  
16 Entrepreneur Center, University of Illinois at  
17 Urbana-Champaign, and Vermilion Advantage; and

18           WHEREAS, Rick Winkel was born Sept. 25, 1956, in Kankakee;  
19 and

20           WHEREAS, He graduated from the DePaul University College of  
21 Law and earned a Bachelors degree in economics from the  
22 University of Illinois; and

23           WHEREAS, He is a member of the Champaign County Bar  
24 Association and the Illinois State Bar Association; and

25           WHEREAS, He is Of Counsel at Meyer, Capel, P.C. in  
26 Champaign; and

27           WHEREAS, Rick and his wife, Debra, have two adult children,  
28 both who continue the tradition of public service; his son is

1 an Army Staff Sergeant stationed in Fort Stewart, GA, and his  
2 daughter is a teacher at St. John's International High School  
3 in Waterloo, Belgium; therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL  
5 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we congratulate Rick  
6 Winkel on his retirement from the Illinois General Assembly  
7 after 12 years of dedicated service; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
9 presented to Rick Winkel with our gratitude for his hard work,  
10 and our best wishes for his future endeavors.