



SJ0040

LRB097 14707 HEP 59683 r

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Interstate 64 is a major thoroughfare in the United States interstate system of roads which, in part, connects rural Southern Illinois with St. Louis, Missouri; and

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WHEREAS, On November 23, 2007, the day after Thanksgiving, Jessica and Kelli Uhl were traveling home from visiting with their father and stepmother; while traveling on Interstate 64 in heavy traffic, the girls were struck by an oncoming Illinois State Police vehicle that was traveling at an estimated speed of 126 miles per hour; and

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WHEREAS, The trooper operating the vehicle at this high rate of speed was reportedly using his onboard computer and cellular phone when he crossed the median and struck the girls' car; and

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WHEREAS, Both 18 year old Jessica and 13 year old Kelli were killed in the crash; a pregnant woman and her husband in another vehicle were also struck and sustained injuries; and

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WHEREAS, The State trooper was convicted of 2 felony counts of reckless homicide in the deaths of Jessica and Kelli, and 2 felony counts of aggravated reckless driving resulting from the injuries to the other couple involved in the accident; as a

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1 result of the felony convictions he was forced to resign from  
2 his position as a State trooper and had his driver's license  
3 revoked for 24 months; and

4 WHEREAS, The girls' mother, Kim Schlau, has left her career  
5 to focus on promoting awareness of the dangers of distracted  
6 driving and now works with recruit classes and police  
7 organizations around the country; her goal is to offer a  
8 personal account of the repercussions and dangers of negligent  
9 pursuit driving in an effort to educate officers and first  
10 responders, and prevent these tragedies from happening to other  
11 families; and

12 WHEREAS, Since the accident, the Illinois State Police have  
13 limited the use of personal cellular telephones by on-duty  
14 troopers and have implemented a four-tier system specifying how  
15 fast troopers may travel while responding to emergency calls;  
16 and

17 WHEREAS, A memorial has been placed on Highway 158 in honor  
18 of Jessica and Kelli under the fatal accident memorial marker  
19 program; the memorial contains Jessica and Kelli's names and  
20 admonishes drivers that "Reckless Driving Costs Lives";  
21 however, the sign is not visible from Interstate 64 and will be  
22 removed in 2 years unless legislation is passed to make the  
23 memorials permanent; and

1           WHEREAS, It is fitting that this body join in honoring the  
2 memory of Jessica and Kelli Uhl and in promoting awareness of  
3 the dangers of reckless driving; therefore, be it

4           RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL  
5 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
6 CONCURRING HEREIN, that the section of Interstate 64 between  
7 Exit 19A at Illinois Route 158 and Exit 23 at Illinois Route 4  
8 be renamed the Jessica and Kelli Uhl Memorial Highway; and be  
9 it further

10          RESOLVED, That the Illinois Department of Transportation  
11 is requested to erect at suitable locations, consistent with  
12 State and federal regulations, appropriate plaques or signs  
13 giving notice of the name of the Jessica and Kelli Uhl Memorial  
14 Highway; and be it further

15          RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
16 presented to the Secretary of the Illinois Department of  
17 Transportation and to the family of Jessica and Kelli Uhl.