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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 the Honorable Augustus Alexander "Gus" Savage of Chicago, Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, Gus Savage was born in Detroit, Michigan on October 30, 1925, and his family moved to the South Side of Chicago 5 years later; he attended public schools in Chicago, graduating from Wendell Phillips High School in 1943; he later served in a segregated unit of the United States Army from 1943 to 1946, where the racial discrimination he witnessed contributed to his future radicalism; after he completed a tour of duty in World War II, he attended Roosevelt University in Chicago, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy in 1951; after being enrolled in Chicago-Kent College of Law during 1952 and 1953, he changed his career to journalism in 1954; and

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WHEREAS, A lifelong civil rights advocate, Gus Savage fought against discrimination in housing, employment, and labor unions; in the 1960s, he chaired Chicago's South End Voters Conference and the Protest at the Polls; he also was the founder and chief strategist of the black political independent movement in the Midwest; he organized and participated in a series of protests, including one against the National Tea

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1 Company (an advertiser in his newspapers) to draw attention to
2 the company's poor record on minority hiring practices; he also
3 played an important role in publicizing the brutal murder of
4 Emmett Till by printing a photograph of the body of the
5 14-year-old African-American boy from Chicago who was killed in
6 Mississippi for allegedly whistling at a white woman; the
7 shocking photographs of the boy's dead body, first published by
8 Savage in "The American Negro: A Magazine of Protest", as well
9 as Jet and the Chicago Defender, caused a public outcry; and

10 WHEREAS, From 1965 to 1980, Gus Savage was one of Chicago's
11 most influential black journalists; he was the owner, editor,
12 and publisher of the Citizen newspapers, a chain of community
13 weeklies in the Chicago area; he became a forceful voice for
14 equality and black liberation, leading campaigns against the
15 Chicago political machine for equal housing access and civil
16 rights; in 1977, he managed Harold Washington's first
17 unsuccessful bid for mayor, and many credit him for paving the
18 way for Washington's successful bid 6 years later; and

19 WHEREAS, In 1980, Gus Savage ascended to the United States
20 House of Representatives as an outsider to elective politics,
21 serving Illinois' Second District; during his decade in
22 Congress, he continued to be a strong voice for equality and
23 minority advancement, serving as Chairman of the House
24 Subcommittee on Economic Development and as Chairman of the

1 Minority Business Braintrust of the Congressional Black
2 Caucus; he also served on the House Committee on Small Business
3 and on Public Works and Transportation; his primary concerns as
4 a Representative focused on advancing the rights of
5 African-Americans and improving conditions in his Chicago
6 district; in 1986, he sponsored an amendment to the National
7 Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1987; a major
8 legislative triumph, the amendment imposed the largest federal
9 contract set-aside program in history on all military
10 procurements, providing a possible \$25 billion for
11 minority-owned and controlled businesses and institutions and
12 historically black colleges; in 1988, he sponsored legislation
13 to build and name the new federal office building as the Ralph
14 H. Metcalfe Building and urged the use of minority contractors
15 for the expensive project; he also sponsored measures to reduce
16 home mortgages in poor communities and fought to curb toxic
17 pollution in his Chicago district; using his position in the
18 House to highlight issues that he believed harmed
19 African-Americans, the Chicago Representative joined his
20 Congressional Black Caucus colleagues in criticizing President
21 Ronald W. Reagan's economic agenda during the 1980s, referring
22 to a 1981 administration proposal that included tax cuts for
23 wealthy Americans and decreased federal spending for programs
24 to assist the poor; he was also a proponent of increased
25 American attention on Africa and toured the continent on
26 several occasions, including congressional visits to Zimbabwe,

1 South Africa, Zaire, Somalia, Angola, and Kenya; and

2 WHEREAS, Gus Savage was preceded in death by his beloved
3 wife, Eunice, in 1981; and

4 WHEREAS, Gus Savage is survived by his son, Thomas, and his
5 wife, Judge Drella Savage; his daughter, Dr. Emma Savage-Davis;
6 his grandchildren, Rev. Thomas Savage, Jr., Chyealla McBride
7 and her husband, Christopher McBride, and Alexandria Davis; and
8 his many other friends and relatives; therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL
10 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
11 Gus Savage and extend our sincere condolences to his family,
12 friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
14 presented to the family of Gus Savage as an expression of our
15 deepest sympathy.