



HR0618

LRB104 20348 LAW 33801 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Wyanetta Johnson of Oak Park, who passed away on January 1, 2026; and

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WHEREAS, Wyanetta Johnson was born on April 18, 1939; she spent her early years in and around the Sikeston and Charleston areas of Missouri, where both Black and white people worked as sharecroppers and her family was engaged with racial justice efforts in the period before the Civil Rights Movement; and

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WHEREAS, Wyanetta Johnson was a beloved and lifelong advocate for racial justice and educational equity for children, parents, professionals, and teachers throughout Oak Park and River Forest, becoming affectionately known as "Mrs. Johnson" to her allies and "Grandma" to generations of students; and

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WHEREAS, Wyanetta Johnson was an integral leader of African American Parents for Purposeful Leadership in Education (A.P.P.L.E.), a community advocacy group established in the late 1980s by Black community members to protect and guide Black and other children in Oak Park schools, including Oak Park and River Forest High School (OPRFHS); she served as

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1 president and vice president, working closely with other Black  
2 leaders, white allies, and progressive board members to  
3 advance racial equity, while helping children navigate and  
4 succeed in school settings that were trying to transition into  
5 integrated, inclusive, and culturally respected places for  
6 Black children; and

7 WHEREAS, Wyanetta Johnson, in her years with A.P.P.L.E.,  
8 oversaw the mentorship of Black students during the school day  
9 and after school, led study skills and homework assistance  
10 programs, and helped organize career days, Saturday school  
11 seminars for parents, overnight retreats for children, and the  
12 popular OPRFHS Fashion and Talent Show, a standing-room-only  
13 event that was open to all students; she also united  
14 A.P.P.L.E. in an election coalition, creating a multiracial  
15 alliance of the Oak Park NAACP, the Oak Park Area Lesbian and  
16 Gay Alliance, students, and racial equity advocates from Oak  
17 Park Elementary School District 97; and

18 WHEREAS, Wyanetta Johnson continued to serve as a powerful  
19 and influential voice for educational equity, helping organize  
20 a legal challenge concerning the gross inequities Black  
21 children experienced in Oak Park's special education program  
22 and due to discipline policies during the 2000s, leading to a  
23 major overhaul of special education at OPRFHS and marking the  
24 beginning of evidence-supported ways to bring equity to the

1 school's discipline practices; in more recent years, she  
2 called for OPRFHS District 200 to adopt a racial equity policy  
3 and to expand high status learning to all students by  
4 launching the Freshman All-Honors Curriculum; and

5 WHEREAS, Wyanetta Johnson was regularly involved in  
6 organizing elections at the local, state, and national level;  
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8 WHEREAS, Wyanetta Johnson was a pillar of her community,  
9 sacrificing time, energy, and personal resources to ensure  
10 that equity was not merely discussed but enacted for more than  
11 40 years; her legacy of leadership will continue to guide the  
12 work of parents, educators, and advocates throughout her  
13 community; therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
15 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
16 we mourn the passing of Wyanetta Johnson and extend our  
17 sincere condolences to her family, friends, and all who knew  
18 and loved her; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
20 presented to the family of Wyanetta Johnson as an expression  
21 of our deepest sympathy.