



State of Wisconsin
2007 - 2008 LEGISLATURE
March 2008 Special Session

LRB-4379/1
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ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 1

May 14, 2008 - Introduced by Representatives COLON, ZEPNICK, TOLES, TURNER, SINICKI and A. WILLIAMS, cosponsored by Senators CARPENTER, TAYLOR, MILLER and COGGS. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization. Referred to Committee on Rules.

1 **Relating to:** the life and public service of Richard Oulahan, founder and longtime
2 executive director of Esperanza Unida, Inc.

3 Whereas, Richard Oulahan was born in New York and was one of seven
4 children. He learned to speak Spanish fluently because his father worked as a
5 reporter for *Time* magazine in Mexico City; and

6 Whereas, Richard Oulahan joined Esperanza Unida in 1973 and became
7 executive director in 1978, and handled hundreds of unemployment claims for the
8 organization during the late 1970s and early 1980s. During that time, the
9 downsizing trend hit Milwaukee hard, resulting in several major manufacturing
10 plant closings and more than 10,000 jobs lost; and

11 Whereas, Richard Oulahan is credited with revamping the organization to aid
12 the dislocated workers in acquiring new skills. The funds and equipment he helped
13 acquire led the agency to the "training business" model now in place; and

14 Whereas, he spent more than 30 years working tirelessly and passionately to
15 build Esperanza Unida from a small south side agency that initially helped injured

1 workers file compensation claims to an organization that won national acclaim for
2 its successful job training programs for Milwaukee’s poor; and

3 Whereas, under Richard Oulahan’s direction the agency grew to 70 workers
4 and an annual budget of \$3.2 million; and

5 Whereas, Oulahan died on May 9, 2008, at age 60 after suffering a brain
6 aneurysm nearly three years ago that left him disabled and unable to continue the
7 work that defined his life; now, therefore, be it

8 ***Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That*** the members of the
9 Wisconsin legislature honor Richard Oulahan for his dedication and passion, and for
10 tirelessly advocating for the poor in Milwaukee; and, be it further

11 ***Resolved, That*** the members of the Wisconsin legislature express their
12 heartfelt sorrow and deepest sympathies to the family, friends, and colleagues of
13 Richard Oulahan; and, be it further

14 ***Resolved, That*** the assembly chief clerk shall provide a copy of this joint
15 resolution to Richard Oulahan’s life partner, Eloisa Gomez, and two sons, Cain and
16 Luke Oulahan, and Marilynn Weiland, mother of his children and former spouse.

17 (END)