

Rep. Sak offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 289.

A resolution to honor the life of Douglas A. Fraser.

Whereas, With a disarming mix of charm, toughness and innate political savvy, former United Auto Workers President Douglas Fraser ushered the union through some of the U.S. auto industry's bleakest years in the 1970s and '80s and helped save a sinking Chrysler Corp. from bankruptcy; and

Whereas, Douglas A. Fraser passed away Saturday, February 23, 2008, at Providence Hospital in Southfield, Michigan. He was 91-years-old; and

Whereas, Douglas A. Fraser was respected for being both an artful politician and impassioned activist. He was one of the first labor leaders to take on many of the thorny issues facing the auto industry today, from global competition to soaring health costs; and

Whereas, Without Mr. Fraser's aggressive lobbying on Capitol Hill and among the UAW rank-and-file, Chrysler would not have been able to secure \$1.5 billion in federal loan guarantees in 1979, which saved the automaker from bankruptcy, according to several labor historians and top UAW officials. With his quick wit and impish grin, Fraser was known for being both easy-going and sometimes biting harsh. Many of the UAW's rank-and-file members felt a personal connection with Fraser, who liked to chat with workers one-on-one during visits to the factory floor. They valued his sincerity and openness, even when he was delivering tough news; and

Whereas, An immigrant from Glasgow, Scotland, Fraser came up through the UAW ranks during the labor movement's rough-and-tumble days, when workers fought life-threatening factory conditions and sit-down strikers faced smoke bombs. He was elected president of UAW Local 227 in Detroit in 1944. His negotiating and leadership skills led pioneering UAW President Walter Reuther to appoint Mr. Fraser his administrative assistant in 1950, launching his trajectory up the UAW leadership. During Douglas Fraser's tenure as UAW president from 1977 to 1983, the union accepted deep concessions as the industry struggled with the oil crisis and declining economy; and

Whereas, After Douglas Fraser retired as UAW president, he became a professor of labor studies at Wayne State University and began a second significant career that spanned 25 years. He continued to work up until a few weeks ago. His office was at the Walter P. Reuther Library, home of the largest collection of labor archives in North America. In 1997, Wayne State, with the support of the UAW, created the Douglas A. Fraser Center for Workplace Issues; and

Whereas, Throughout his life, Mr. Fraser championed social causes. He joined the civil rights movement in the 1960s and later pushed the Big Three to hire more women and minorities. A lifelong Democrat, he stayed active in political and social causes after he retired, serving on the boards of several organizations and as an AFL-CIO arbitrator helping to resolve disputes between other unions; and

Whereas, In an interview with The Detroit News in 1990, Douglas Fraser reflected on his time at the helm of the UAW. "When you're going through it, it's agonizing," he said. "But when you accomplish something, find solutions to terribly complex problems, you get a great feeling of satisfaction. And it is the best of feelings because you did it for others; you didn't do it for yourself."; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, that the members of this legislative body honor the life of Douglas A. Fraser. Godspeed him home. He will be greatly missed.