Leader Durkin honors Billy Lawless with House Resolution for Irish-American leadership, efforts

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SPRINGFIELD – House Republican Leader Jim Durkin (R-Western Springs) honored Irish-American advocate and restaurateur Billy Lawless with a resolution in the House of Representatives for his years of dedication to improving relations between Ireland

and Illinois.

"Billy has become the leading voice in Illinois for Irish-American relations and has fought diligently for the well-being of Irish men and women living in our state," Durkin said. "In addition to being advocate for the immigrant community, Billy is also a

successful entrepreneur having opened six restaurants and creating hundreds of jobs across the Chicagoland area."

A native of Rahoon in County Galway, Ireland, Lawless is an independent politician and businessman who emigrated to the United States in 1998. In the last 19 years, Lawless has fought tirelessly as an advocate for Irish-American rights in Illinois and in Washington, D.C., having become a prominent voice on immigration reform. He is the co-founder of Illinois Business Immigration Coalition, former Vice President of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and former chairman of Chicago Celts for Immigration Reform. In May 2016, Ireland's Prime Minister Taoiseach Enda Kenny appointed Lawless as the first Irish Senator to represent Irish immigrants living overseas.

Lawless began his restaurant business in 1998, opening a small Irish-themed pub in Wrigleyville with ten employees. Today, Lawless's restaurant empire includes six restaurants in the Chicagoland area that employ over 300 people. He is also a former member of the Illinois Restaurant Association.

"I am humbled to receive this honor from the Illinois General Assembly and accept it on behalf of all hard working immigrants, particularly those of Irish descent, who continue to make their mark in this great country," Lawless said.

House Resolution 617 passed the chamber unanimously.