



HJ0038

LRB100 11671 MST 22569 r

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Overloaded school backpacks are causing
3 increasing problems of back pain and spinal strain for students
4 across the nation; and

5 WHEREAS, Because spinal ligaments and muscles are not fully
6 developed until after age 16, overweight backpacks are a cause
7 of repeated low-level stress that may result in chronic neck,
8 shoulder, or back pain in children; and

9 WHEREAS, According to the United States Consumer Product
10 Safety Commission, more than 7,000 emergency room visits each
11 year are due to backpack-related injuries; in 2010 alone,
12 doctor offices, clinics, and hospital emergency rooms treated
13 nearly 28,000 strains, sprains, dislocations, and fractures
14 from backpacks; and

15 WHEREAS, Studies have shown heavy loads carried on the back
16 have the potential to damage the soft tissues of the shoulder,
17 causing microstructural damage to the nerves and damage to
18 internal organs; and

19 WHEREAS, Studies have shown an increase in curvatures of
20 the spine and compressed intervertebral height when backpacks
21 exceed 10% of the body weight of a child; and

1 WHEREAS, The Global Burden of Disease Study of 2010 showed
2 back pain as the number one cause of disability worldwide and
3 musculoskeletal disorders as the second cause; and

4 WHEREAS, School textbooks are much heavier now than many
5 years ago; in addition to textbooks, students often carry
6 computers, cell phones, water bottles, running shoes, band
7 instruments, and other equipment considered essential to have
8 readily available; and

9 WHEREAS, More than 90% of students carry backpacks, which
10 have been found to weigh as much as 25% of the child's body
11 weight; and

12 WHEREAS, Backpacks are often not worn correctly - often
13 slung over one shoulder or allowed to hang significantly below
14 the waistline, increasing the weight on the shoulders and
15 making the child lean forward when walking or stoop forward
16 when standing to compensate for the weight; therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
18 HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE SENATE
19 CONCURRING HEREIN, that we urge that all school administrators,
20 teachers, parents, and students be educated about the potential
21 health impact of heavy backpacks and take proactive measures to

1 avoid injury; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That Doctors of Chiropractic be permitted to
3 conduct mandatory interval scoliosis examinations on children;
4 and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That schools should work with their
6 Parent-Teacher Associations and Parent-Teacher Organizations
7 to assess the extent to which students use overweight backpacks
8 and to promote innovative homework strategies, lessening the
9 need to take all school materials and books back and forth each
10 day; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That schools should consider the following
12 points when developing their backpack education talking
13 points:

14 (1) Backpacks should weigh no more than a maximum of
15 10% of the body weight of the child;

16 (2) Encourage ergonomic backpacks with individualized
17 compartments to efficiently hold books and equipment;

18 (3) Encourage children to wear both shoulder straps and
19 not sling the backpack over one shoulder;

1 (4) Encourage wide, padded adjustable straps to fit the
2 body of the child;

3 (5) Encourage the heaviest books be left at school and
4 handouts or workbooks be used for homework assignments;

5 (6) Schools should consider moving toward e-textbooks
6 as federal and State funding becomes available; and

7 (7) Schools should consider integrated education about
8 backpacks by using a hanging scale in the classroom,
9 allowing students to weigh their backpacks and enter the
10 results into a graph that would track the weights, and then
11 look at the data to determine what can be done to lighten
12 loads; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
14 delivered to State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Smith.