



SR0528

LRB100 12828 MST 26605 r

1 SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, There are over 384,000 individuals in Illinois who
3 are deaf or have a severe hearing loss; and

4 WHEREAS, There are over two million individuals in Illinois
5 who have mild to severe hearing loss; and

6 WHEREAS, In Illinois, there are nearly 500 children who are
7 identified with a hearing loss each year; and

8 WHEREAS, Hearing loss can happen at any point from birth to
9 late adulthood; and

10 WHEREAS, About 2.4 million people in the United States are
11 DeafBlind; and

12 WHEREAS, In Illinois, there are about 655 DeafBlind
13 individuals, but statistics regarding populations with hearing
14 loss may be underreported due to individuals denying or
15 refusing to admit as having any kind of hearing or vision loss;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, The needs and interests of the deaf, hard of
18 hearing, and DeafBlind community are diverse; and

1 WHEREAS, In 1995, various leaders in the deaf and hard of
2 hearing community began discussions for the necessity of a
3 governmental body in Illinois to focus on the needs of
4 individuals with hearing loss; and

5 WHEREAS, The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission was
6 established in 1997 to be the coordinating and advocating body
7 that acts on behalf of the interests of persons in Illinois who
8 are deaf or hard of hearing, including children, adults, senior
9 citizens, and those with any additional disability; and

10 WHEREAS, News reports and various citizens, including
11 individuals with hearing loss, have raised concerns that the
12 Commission has been unable to serve the community to the best
13 of its ability; therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL
15 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we urge the Office of
16 the Governor to work in collaboration with the Deaf and Hard of
17 Hearing Commission to develop a report of recommendations to
18 help ensure the Commission is better able to serve the deaf,
19 hard of hearing, and DeafBlind community; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That at a minimum, the final report shall include
21 an analysis of and recommendations on the following issues:

- 1 (1) Hiring freezes placed on or at the Commission;
- 2 (2) Any official orders that limit the functions of the
3 Commission, including orders that have come from the Office
4 of the Governor, the Governor's Office of Management and
5 Budget, the Department of Central Management Services, or
6 any other appropriate entities;
- 7 (3) Whether the transfer of the administration of the
8 Interpreter for the Deaf Licensure Act of 2007 to the
9 Department of Financial and Professional Regulation will
10 better benefit interpreters and the deaf, hard of hearing,
11 and DeafBlind community, and any positive and negative
12 effects the transfer would have, including, but not limited
13 to, any change in related fee amounts;
- 14 (4) Whether the Commission should be housed within the
15 Department of Human Services, and the report shall include,
16 at minimum, the following:
- 17 (a) If the move will provide the Commission with
18 more resources and administrative help so that it can focus
19 on providing specialized services for the deaf, hard of
20 hearing, and DeafBlind community; and
- 21 (b) If the move can allow for the Commission to

1 operate as an independent entity and not create conflicts
2 of interest between the Department program staff who
3 currently serve deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind
4 populations, the Commission, and the populations that the
5 Commission serves; and

6 (5) Identifying groups or populations with hearing
7 loss that have been underserved or are not formally
8 recognized; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the Office of the Governor and the Deaf and
10 Hard of Hearing Commission shall take input and testimony from
11 individuals from the community to be included in the report;
12 and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the Office of the Governor and the Deaf and
14 Hard of Hearing Commission shall develop a method to allow for
15 individuals who prefer to remain anonymous to submit their
16 input or testimony anonymously; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Office of the Governor and the Deaf and
18 Hard of Hearing Commission shall promulgate any developed
19 methods to receive input from the community; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That no later than January 1, 2018, the Office of
21 the Governor and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission shall

1 submit a report of their findings and recommendations to the
2 General Assembly; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That the Office of the Governor and the Deaf and
4 Hard of Hearing Commission shall make this report available to
5 the public, including, but not limited to, by posting it to the
6 appropriate official agency website.