



HR1231

LRB100 23544 MST 42586 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, In 1867, the University of Illinois at  
3 Urbana-Champaign was founded as a land-grant institution; it  
4 became a beacon of education and knowledge for the community,  
5 state, country, and world; and

6           WHEREAS, In the wake of the Civil War and the assassination  
7 of President Abraham Lincoln, the promise of unqualified access  
8 to the new university by Illinois citizens of all races  
9 remained a long-deferred dream for African American citizens;  
10 and

11           WHEREAS, Across the ensuing years, when the University of  
12 Illinois admitted African Americans they were not fully  
13 welcomed to the campus; and

14           WHEREAS, Following the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin  
15 Luther King Jr. in 1968, African American students and  
16 community residents redoubled their commitment to the battle  
17 for civil rights, and they pushed the University of Illinois to  
18 significantly and rapidly increase the enrollment of African  
19 American students; and

20           WHEREAS, In 1968, through the groundbreaking Special  
21 Educational Opportunities Program (Project 500), 565 newly

1 admitted African Americans joined the student body and earned a  
2 singular place in the history of the University of Illinois;  
3 and

4 WHEREAS, The local African American community and church  
5 congregations opened their doors and their hearts just as  
6 quickly and warmly to these new students as they had done for  
7 all like them who had come to the University of Illinois in the  
8 preceding decades; and

9 WHEREAS, These community members and organizations  
10 throughout the cities of Champaign and Urbana deserve special  
11 recognition for their unwavering support of Project 500  
12 students in their academic endeavors and in their lives beyond  
13 the classroom; and

14 WHEREAS, Today, as we celebrate 50 years of work in the  
15 struggle for racial justice, progress, learning, and  
16 achievement that was bolstered by Project 500, the cities of  
17 Urbana and Champaign publicly have renewed their commitment to  
18 fostering communities that welcome and support all who come  
19 there to live and learn; and

20 WHEREAS, The Project 500 alumni, through their words and  
21 deeds, have fundamentally and forever changed the University of  
22 Illinois and the cities of Urbana and Champaign for the

1 betterment of all of us; therefore, be it

2       RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
3 HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we  
4 declare September 28, 2018 as Project 500 Day in the State of  
5 Illinois; and be it further

6       RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
7 presented to Project 500 as a symbol of our respect and esteem.