



HR0683

LRB101 16403 MST 65781 r

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Illinois is a rich agricultural state, home to  
3 over 1 million farmers and over 72,000 farms that grow fruits  
4 and vegetables and raise livestock; and

5 WHEREAS, Almost 50% of all land in the United States is set  
6 aside for farming, including 75% of all land in Illinois; and

7 WHEREAS, Farming is a vital part of the Illinois economy as  
8 it generates over \$19 billion each year; and

9 WHEREAS, Farmers generally do not turn a profit from their  
10 work until they have been in the sector for several years,  
11 which makes this necessary profession a risky endeavor; and

12 WHEREAS, Student loan debt is on the rise, totaling over  
13 \$1.5 trillion and creating an additional barrier for young  
14 farmers to make a living, leading many young people to steer  
15 away from farming as a profession; and

16 WHEREAS, The number of beginning farmers fell 20% between  
17 2007 and 2012; and

18 WHEREAS, The average age of farmers in the United States is  
19 continually rising, climbing to over 58 in 2012 from 49 in

1 1945, which means young farmers are disappearing from the  
2 economy; and

3 WHEREAS, The United States will see 66% of its farmer-owned  
4 land needing a transfer in ownership within the next 25 years;  
5 the United States also only added 1,220 young operators to its  
6 farming economy, which means there are not enough new farmers  
7 to handle the transfer of land that will need to take place;  
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Adding farmers to the Public Service Loan  
10 Forgiveness Program will create a pathway for young people with  
11 student debt to succeed in agriculture; and

12 WHEREAS, Farmers are critical to our nation's well-being as  
13 they produce the food we eat, steward nearly half the country's  
14 land, and support rural economies; therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
16 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
17 we believe farming is an integral public service and that  
18 farmers constitute public service professionals; and be it  
19 further

20 RESOLVED, That we urge the U.S. Congress to expand the  
21 Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program so that it includes

1 farming as an applicable career for loan forgiveness; and be it  
2 further

3       RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
4 delivered to the President of the United States, the U.S.  
5 Senate Majority Leader, the U.S. Senate Minority Leader, the  
6 U.S. Speaker of the House, the U.S. House of Representatives  
7 Minority Leader, and all members of the Illinois Congressional  
8 Delegation.