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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) has identified 1,132 community colleges in the United States, and 980 are public colleges; and

WHEREAS, Nearly half of all undergraduates in the United States, or just over 13 million or 25% of all graduates, enroll in community colleges; and

WHEREAS, 6,000 students from 10 community colleges in California, Michigan, Nebraska, North Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming, responding to a recent North Carolina State University research team, identified the top two reasons they find it difficult to complete community college; the top two reasons, tied at 34% each, were having to work and not being able to afford the expense; and

WHEREAS, In 1965, the average public college tuition was \$256 annually; today, the average annual public community college tuition has risen to \$3,347; and

WHEREAS, Individuals earning at least a two-year community college degree will earn nearly \$400,000 more over their career than a person with a high school diploma; and

1 WHEREAS, 44 million people in the U.S. are currently in
2 \$1.48 trillion debt, and attending a community college could
3 cut down on cost and indebtedness, even for those choosing to
4 transfer credits to a four-year institution; and

5 WHEREAS, The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics cites that
6 some of the highest paying jobs in the United States will
7 increase over the decade and will require at least a two-year
8 college degree; and

9 WHEREAS, Economies once built on low skilled industries,
10 specifically in the south, must now compete globally for jobs
11 that require training beyond high school; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1944, U.S. Congress passed the G.I. Bill, which
13 provided free higher education to millions of World War II
14 veterans and was the most successful legislation in modern
15 history, laying the groundwork for the post war economic boom
16 and growth of the middle class; and

17 WHEREAS, The state of California did not begin to charge
18 for a college education until the 1980s; and

19 WHEREAS, Twenty states offer various forms of free
20 community college, including Arkansas, California, Delaware,
21 Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Memphis,

1 Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee,
2 West Virginia, and Washington; therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
4 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
5 we urge all municipalities and state governments to provide
6 community college education at no cost; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That we urge Congress to pass legislation
8 requiring all states to make community college free and to
9 provide the necessary supportive funding to assure its reality;
10 and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That we recognize the increased burden this will
12 place on our educational system and urge that two years at a
13 public university or college should be subsidized at a similar
14 rate to a local community college; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That we recognize the effect that this could have
16 on historically black colleges and universities, as a
17 disproportionate share of their students struggle
18 economically, and to preserve the heritage and history of these
19 culturally significant educational institutions, we must also
20 increase funding to these institutions to support their
21 scholarship funds to maintain necessary enrollment; and be it
22 further

1 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
2 delivered to the President of the United States, the Vice
3 President of the United States, all members of the United
4 States House of Representatives and the United States Senate,
5 and other federal and state government officials and agencies
6 as appropriate.