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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, High-quality, early childhood care and education have been shown by decades of respected research to play a positive role in the learning and development of young children, including greater chances of entering school prepared to succeed academically and behaviorally, graduate high school on time, and avoid criminal trouble; and

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WHEREAS, Early learning is essential for reaching the State of Illinois' overarching objectives for improving education and its outcomes, including the goal of at least 60 percent of residents holding a post-secondary education degree by the year 2025; and

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WHEREAS, In 2006, the State of Illinois adopted in statute the "Preschool for All" goal of increasing young children's access to voluntary, high-quality, early learning programs, over time and as resources allow, with priority attention focused on children who struggle the most; and

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WHEREAS, The State of Illinois has accordingly and wisely increased its investments in early learning over the course of several years, gradually strengthening access to preschool and birth-to-3 services for communities statewide; and

21

1 WHEREAS, Tens of thousands of young children still lack
2 access to the high-quality early learning programs that their
3 parents seek for them; and

4 WHEREAS, Too many low-income, working parents still
5 struggle to find affordable, reliable, high-quality options
6 for ensuring their children are in good child care settings
7 during the hours when parents are on the job; and

8 WHEREAS, The quality of early childhood services depends in
9 large part on solid program infrastructure, ranging from
10 well-qualified teachers and support personnel to supportive
11 data systems; and

12 WHEREAS, Infrastructure also includes safe,
13 developmentally appropriate classrooms and related physical
14 space for young children to learn; and

15 WHEREAS, High-quality, early childhood facilities have
16 been shown to help children grow by improving play interaction,
17 lessening conflicts, and advancing their school readiness, as
18 characterized by Temple University's Family and Children's
19 Policy Initiative; and

20 WHEREAS, The national Bipartisan Policy Center recently
21 declared that "safe and developmentally appropriate early care

1 and learning programs are an essential component of building
2 healthy and economically sustainable communities in which
3 families and young children thrive", and that "early learning
4 programs are critical to the health and success of local
5 communities and the national economy"; and

6 WHEREAS, The Bipartisan Policy Center adds that
7 "investments in early care and learning facilities should be an
8 element of federal, state, and local economic-development
9 strategies"; and

10 WHEREAS, Illinois policymakers responded to communities'
11 brick-and-mortar early learning needs and set a sensible
12 precedent in their 2009 capital plan by including a \$45 million
13 appropriation from the Build Illinois Bond Fund for this
14 State's first Early Childhood Construction Grant program; and

15 WHEREAS, The Capital Development Board received 227
16 applications totaling more than \$539 million in requests for
17 these construction and renovation resources, or about 12 times
18 the amount of grant funding available, illustrating the
19 enormous scope of communities' early childhood capital needs;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, Funding limitations in 2011 restricted resulting
22 grant awards to only 6 percent of the project applicants from

1 school districts and not for profit providers in communities
2 with particularly underserved populations of children under
3 age 5; and

4 WHEREAS, Funding delays, exacerbated by the State's recent
5 budget impasse, prevented some of this funding from ever being
6 delivered to approved grantees for desperately needed early
7 childhood projects; and

8 WHEREAS, The urgent demand for such assistance remains, as
9 demonstrated in the 2018 Capital Needs Assessment Survey of
10 Schools conducted by the Illinois State Board of Education,
11 which reveals the need for over 200 additional preK classrooms
12 statewide; and

13 WHEREAS, Those ISBE survey results reflect only the needs
14 of the 350 school districts that responded to the board's query
15 and do not include the needs of still other school systems; and

16 WHEREAS, Those ISBE survey results also exclude the needs
17 of the hundreds of non-school, community-based providers of
18 early childhood services that help relieve capacity pressure on
19 maxed-out schools, while also meeting the needs and choices of
20 parents in their own neighborhoods and localities; therefore,
21 be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL
2 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that one of the most
3 urgently required, realistic, and important ways to
4 accommodate the early childhood program needs of today and to
5 accommodate growth for meeting their future needs is to provide
6 stronger support for such programs' physical infrastructure;
7 and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That the next state capital program to meet
9 Illinois' physical infrastructure needs should reflect that
10 reality, upholding the important precedent set in the 2009
11 Early Childhood Construction Grant Program; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That Illinois is urged to dedicate a minimum of
13 \$250 million from state bond sources for the purpose of
14 supporting critical, early childhood building and renovation
15 projects for approved grant applicants from school districts
16 and community-based service providers; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That our State should prioritize such help for
18 applicants from communities with particularly underserved
19 populations of children under the age of 5 years of age; and be
20 it further

21 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
22 delivered to the offices of the Governor, the Capital

1 Development Board, the Illinois State Board of Education, and
2 the Illinois Department of Human Services.