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1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The Family First Prevention Services Act was
3 signed into law as part of the Bipartisan Budget act on
4 February 9, 2018; and

5 WHEREAS, Young people involved in the child welfare system
6 do best in families, in a safe and stable environment that
7 supports their long-term well-being, according to research;
8 the passage of Family First took a large step toward this
9 vision by restructuring how the federal government spends
10 money on child welfare to ensure that more children in foster
11 care are placed with families; the law also provides more
12 support for critical services, such as mental health and
13 substance abuse treatment, in-home training, and family
14 therapy that can help prevent the need for foster care in the
15 first place; and

16 WHEREAS, The law provides an opportunity for positive
17 change and supports ongoing efforts to transform our child
18 welfare system by keeping children and teens safely with their
19 own family and to avoid the often-traumatizing experience of
20 unnecessary placement into the foster care system; its name
21 reflects the elements of the legislation, a family first for
22 children and teens with prevention services to keep kids safe
23 and able to reach maturity in their family; prevention

1 services, including in-home, skills-based training for
2 parents, mental health care, including family therapy, and
3 substance abuse and treatment programs are important parts of
4 Family First; when the courts determine that children need to
5 enter foster care, Family First specifically calls for them to
6 be placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting
7 to meet their individual needs; the law recognizes that
8 treatment programs can provide short-term, customized
9 therapeutic support while kids are living in families; this
10 could be with birth parents, other relatives, close friends,
11 or foster caregivers; residential treatment may be needed for
12 short-term stabilization, usually less than 90 days, with
13 follow-up services when children return to their family;
14 federally-reimbursed services are meant to support and
15 strengthen families, so children don't enter care; they are
16 also meant to maintain child and family connections when
17 children enter foster care or require short-term residential
18 treatment, and they provide six months of aftercare when a
19 child has transitioned home from either setting; the focus is
20 on helping children and families live and grow together safely
21 and successfully; and

22 WHEREAS, This Act reforms the federal child welfare
23 financing streams, Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social
24 Security Act, to provide services to families who are at risk
25 of entering the child welfare system; and

1 WHEREAS, This Act aims to prevent children from entering
2 foster care by allowing federal reimbursement for mental
3 health services, substance use treatment, and in-home
4 parenting skill training; it also seeks to improve the
5 well-being of children already in foster care by motivating
6 states to reduce placement of children in congregate care; and

7 WHEREAS, With an approved Title IV-E plan, the State would
8 have the option to use Title IV-E funds to prevent the
9 placement of children and youth into the foster care system
10 and to provide up to 12 months of mental health services,
11 substance abuse treatment, and in-home parenting training to
12 families at risk of entry into the child welfare system;
13 additionally, the State could use Title IV-E reimbursement for
14 up to 12 months for a child who has been placed with a parent
15 in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for
16 substance abuse, regardless of whether the child meets the
17 AFDC income-eligibility requirement for Title IV-E; and

18 WHEREAS, A competitive grant for recruitment and retention
19 of high-quality foster families is provided and made available
20 through 2022; parameters for states to expand funding
21 eligibility for youth "aging out" of foster care are provided;
22 and

1 WHEREAS, Decreasing the number of children newly enrolled
2 in the foster care system by providing federally-reimbursable
3 services to families at risk of entering the child welfare
4 system will benefit the State of Illinois; therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
6 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
7 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we urge the State to support
8 the Family First Prevention Services Act to help decrease the
9 number of children who are entered into foster care; and be it
10 further

11 RESOLVED, That we call on the State to restore funding for
12 family intake and add more funding for family reunification
13 and restore college scholarships for all the wards of the
14 State who express a desire to further their education and
15 attend college; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
17 delivered to the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family
18 Services, the Illinois Department of Human Services, and the
19 Illinois Student Assistance Commission.