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1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The benefits of higher education programming
3 (HEP) to committed persons and to society are well-documented;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, There is clear and documented interest among
6 persons committed in the Illinois Department of Corrections
7 (IDOC) to participate in higher education opportunities during
8 their incarceration; and

9 WHEREAS, There is clear and documented interest among
10 public and private not-for-profit colleges and universities in
11 Illinois to offer a range of higher education programming
12 (e.g., credit-bearing, non-credit bearing, upper-division,
13 lower-division, graduate studies) focused on different content
14 areas (e.g., arts, liberal arts, technology, humanities,
15 business, public policy, and social services) in the State's
16 prisons; and

17 WHEREAS, IDOC has committed to improving HEP programming;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, IDOC policies can support incarcerated students
20 and HEP's efficient operation and growth; and

1 WHEREAS, Public and private not-for-profit universities
2 and colleges in Illinois have primary expertise in running
3 higher education at conventional campuses, in-person at IDOC
4 facilities, and via correspondence; and

5 WHEREAS, Public and private not-for-profit universities
6 and colleges in Illinois have established HEP programs and are
7 guided by best practices as articulated by the Illinois
8 Coalition for Higher Education in Prison, the Alliance for
9 Higher Education in Prison, and other expert bodies; and

10 WHEREAS, A diversity of higher education programs run by
11 public and private not-for-profit institutions will best
12 respond to the needs and interests of the diverse population
13 of persons committed in IDOC; and

14 WHEREAS, The Illinois General Assembly recognizes the
15 importance of providing opportunity for all incarcerated in
16 Illinois to access HEP; therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
18 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
19 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that there is created the Illinois
20 Higher Education in Prison Task Force whose purpose is the
21 following:

22 (1) To obtain and analyze existing data on HEP in

1 Illinois;

2 (2) To identify data points that IDOC should collect
3 to allow for meaningful, statewide evaluation of HEP;

4 (3) To assess barriers and opportunities to HEP in
5 Illinois, including barriers and opportunities to
6 continuing higher education upon release from IDOC; and

7 (4) To recommend a legislative action plan to expand
8 access to HEP in Illinois and propel Illinois to being a
9 national exemplar in that area; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall consist of the
11 following members:

12 (1) The Governor or his or her designee, who will
13 serve as Chair;

14 (2) The Director of the Justice, Equity, and
15 Opportunity Initiative as designated by the Lieutenant
16 Governor;

17 (3) The Director of IDOC or his or her chief of staff;

18 (4) The Chair of the Illinois Board of Higher
19 Education or his or her designee;

20 (5) The Executive Director of the Illinois Community
21 College Board or his or her designee;

22 (6) The Executive Director of the Illinois Criminal
23 Justice Information Authority or his or her designee;

24 (7) One State Representative appointed by the Speaker
25 of the House of Representatives, one State Representative

1 appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of
2 Representatives, one State Senator appointed by the
3 President of the Senate, and one State Senator appointed
4 by the Minority Leader of the Senate;

5 (8) Two academic officers (e.g., deans or provosts) at
6 institutions currently or formerly involved with HEP in
7 Illinois, one appointed by the Speaker of the House and
8 one by the Minority Leader of the House;

9 (9) Two current or past administrators or instructors
10 in Illinois HEP programs, one appointed by the Speaker of
11 the House and one by the Minority Leader of the House;

12 (10) Two formerly incarcerated individuals who
13 participated in HEP in Illinois, one appointed by the
14 Speaker of the House and one by the Minority Leader of the
15 House; and

16 (11) Two recognized experts on HEP, one appointed by
17 the Speaker of the House and one by the Minority Leader of
18 the House; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall have all appointments
20 made within 30 days of the adoption of this resolution; and be
21 it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Task Force members shall serve without
23 compensation; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall hold at least six
2 meetings, but otherwise shall meet at the call of the Chair;
3 and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That the Illinois Criminal Justice Information
5 Authority shall provide administrative and technical support
6 to the Task Force and be responsible for administering its
7 operations and ensuring that the requirements of the Task
8 Force are met; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall submit its final
10 report to the Governor and General Assembly no later than July
11 31, 2022; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the final report shall be made available
13 online for the general public, and upon the release of its
14 report, the Task Force is dissolved; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the State of Illinois commits to becoming a
16 national exemplar of higher education for incarcerated persons
17 by supporting and encouraging the establishment of new
18 programs and by enhancing existing programs across the State;
19 and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That IDOC is urged to train its correctional
21 officers and other personnel on the values of HEP; and be it

1 further

2 RESOLVED, That universities and colleges will be in charge
3 of admissions, program design, academic content, and
4 implementation of their respective programs; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That IDOC is urged to enact and implement
6 internal policies that support HEP programs' efficient
7 operation and their growth and that support incarcerated
8 students; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That IDOC is urged to encourage all eligible
10 committed persons to apply for higher education programming,
11 without restriction as to offense, sentence length, or
12 remaining time to be served; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That IDOC is urged to implement transfer holds
14 of committed persons enrolled in higher education programming
15 until that person completes their courses, unless documented
16 safety reasons compel a transfer; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That IDOC is urged to not discriminate between
18 higher education programs based on whether they offer degrees
19 or course credit; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That IDOC is urged to not prevent committed

1 persons from participating in more than one higher education
2 program, either concurrently or consecutively, or after they
3 have completed a degree while incarcerated; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That IDOC is urged to not limit HEP
5 opportunities to those who have a High School Equivalency
6 (HSE) or high school degree diploma or discriminate against
7 those programs that do not require a HSE or high school
8 diploma.