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LRB102 24842 ECR 34089 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Professional sports franchises often relocate to address seating capacity limits, restructure debt, modernize the stadium experience, or to gain full authority over a new stadium; and

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WHEREAS, The Chicago Bears professional football team has expressed a willingness to buy property in the Village of Arlington Heights; and

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WHEREAS, Chicago Bears fans have also expressed an openness toward the team moving, with a recent informal survey of 6,000 people by Patch.com indicating that over 70 percent of respondents would like to see the team move; and

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WHEREAS, The former Arlington Park property presents itself as a fresh development opportunity for the Village of Arlington Heights and the Chicago Bears team; it is conveniently situated off a major highway, just a twenty-minute drive from O'Hare International Airport, and, crucially, it has its own dedicated stop on the Metra commuter rail line; and

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WHEREAS, The Chicago Bears' current lease payment to the Chicago Park District is \$6.48 million per year, though the

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1 team only paid \$3.1 million in 2020 after fans were not allowed
2 to attend games because of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

3 WHEREAS, Taxpayers have covered over \$430 million of the
4 Soldier Field renovation project; this is a figure that will
5 balloon substantially before the debt fully matures and is
6 paid off in 2032; and

7 WHEREAS, The economics of major professional sport leagues
8 have been changing dramatically in recent years; from
9 television and streaming rights to team-sanctioned legalized
10 sports betting, worldwide merchandising deals, and massive
11 media empires, teams have become corporate conglomerates with
12 wide-ranging interests far beyond the stadium; and

13 WHEREAS, The location of the Chicago Bears team matters
14 much less than their name, which implies that the team is one
15 with Chicago so long as the team keeps its namesake; and

16 WHEREAS, Moving to a stadium in Arlington Heights presents
17 an economic opportunity for a top-of-the-line stadium
18 featuring a higher capacity and burgeoning entertainment,
19 restaurant, and retail industry; the Arlington Heights
20 location provides easier access via the State's roadways and
21 Metra commuter rail lines; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
2 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
3 we urge the owners of the Chicago Bears organization to reach
4 an agreement that all parties see as equitable and beneficial
5 to move the team to the former Arlington Park property; and be
6 it further

7 RESOLVED, That the Chicago Bears organization should move
8 to the Arlington Heights location without requesting
9 incentives from local or state government; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
11 delivered to the Chicago Bears organization, Chicago Mayor
12 Lori Lightfoot, and Arlington Heights Mayor Tom Hayes.