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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Homelessness is a matter of life and death; the
3 scope of the homelessness crisis and the immediate need for
4 housing in Illinois is staggering; and

5 WHEREAS, In 2020, at least 10,431 Illinoisans experienced
6 homelessness; when the number of people experiencing
7 doubled-up homelessness, living with others because of
8 economic hardship or housing loss, is combined with those who
9 requested services from the U.S. Department of Housing and
10 Urban Development (HUD) over the course of 2020, the count is
11 over 65,000 people experiencing homelessness in Chicago alone;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, According to Illinois State Board of Education
14 (ISBE) data, 47,455 school children were identified as
15 experiencing homelessness in the 2019-2020 school year; and

16 WHEREAS, Chronic homelessness has increased both in number
17 and percentage; the percentage of the homeless population
18 consisting of chronically homeless rose from 9% in 2016 to 22%
19 in 2020; and

20 WHEREAS, People experiencing homelessness include those
21 with substance use disorders, HIV/AIDS, serious mental

1 illness, veterans, and survivors of domestic violence; and

2 WHEREAS, Black people are eight times more likely to
3 experience homelessness than white people; Black Illinoisans
4 comprise 14% of the population of the State, but they
5 constitute 61% of residents experiencing homelessness; and

6 WHEREAS, Regions of the State with high concentrations of
7 disabled populations are considered at greater risk for
8 homelessness; and

9 WHEREAS, People experiencing unsheltered homelessness may
10 become frequent utilizers of hospital emergency rooms;
11 encampments, tents, cars, abandoned buildings, and park
12 benches, are unsafe, unhealthy, and undignified, and
13 unsheltered homelessness is especially dangerous during cold
14 weather, heat waves, and extreme weather conditions; and

15 WHEREAS, Crisis housing, the foundational safety net for
16 persons in immediate need of shelter, includes overnight
17 emergency and domestic violence shelters, transitional
18 housing, recuperative care/medical respite, and recovery
19 homes; and

20 WHEREAS, During COVID-19, shelter capacity diminished
21 significantly, and many areas across Illinois lack any

1 fixed-site emergency shelters for people who are experiencing
2 homelessness; prior to the pandemic, a significant proportion
3 of emergency shelter bed capacity included rotating,
4 congregate shelter; non-congregate shelter (NCS) became
5 necessary to protect highly vulnerable people experiencing
6 homelessness during the pandemic; the rotating shelter model,
7 which has never been adequate for many reasons, no longer
8 exists, and significant investment would be required to
9 rebuild it; and

10 WHEREAS, Emergency housing provided through converted
11 hotels, dorms, and schools and the construction of new
12 non-congregate emergency housing is not expected to eliminate
13 the need for other types of crisis housing; and

14 WHEREAS, Crisis housing is a critical part of and the
15 gateway to the continuum of housing, including affordable and
16 permanent supportive housing; Illinois lacks sufficient crisis
17 housing to meet its needs, allowing many people experiencing
18 unsheltered homelessness to languish for months and even years
19 until other housing options become available; there is an
20 urgent need for effective, safe, and dignified non-congregate
21 crisis housing; and

22 WHEREAS, A model of rapid-response transitional shelter
23 villages with case management has emerged; this model of

1 transitional housing can serve as a bridge from unsheltered
2 homelessness to long-term housing; the faster people are moved
3 off the street, the sooner their path to stability can begin;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, Residents of these transitional shelter villages
6 are connected to housing with wraparound social services, such
7 as mental health care from a local service provider and
8 on-site amenities, such as showers and laundry; with a safe
9 place to sleep, a supportive environment, access to meals,
10 hygiene facilities, and a case manager, residents can focus on
11 finding permanent housing and employment opportunities; and

12 WHEREAS, Transitional shelter villages combine the safety
13 of private units with the benefits of a communal environment
14 to offer residents security and a pathway to stability;
15 residents can lock their belongings in their unit, access
16 on-site social services, and be a part of a community; and

17 WHEREAS, At least nine other states across the country
18 have successfully launched dozens of rapid-response
19 transitional shelter villages and have achieved successful
20 outcomes; transitional shelter villages have been launched in
21 cold weather climates, including Madison, Wisconsin and
22 Boston, Massachusetts; and

1 WHEREAS, This model is more cost-effective than any
2 institutional setting per person or unit and can be built at a
3 fraction of the cost of traditional homeless shelters, which
4 can take years to build; prefabricated shelters can be quickly
5 installed and are proven to help people transition into
6 permanent housing; therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
8 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
9 we urge the State of Illinois to launch a pilot project to
10 establish a transitional shelter village that will support the
11 crisis housing and health needs of people currently
12 experiencing unsheltered homelessness; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
14 delivered to the Speaker of the House, the House Minority
15 Leader, the Senate President, the Senate Minority Leader, the
16 Governor, and the Secretary of the Illinois Department of
17 Human Services.