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LRB102 17674 LAW 23581 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Over the past several months, the Illinois State Board of Education has heard from superintendents, building principals, classroom teachers, parents, and students regarding their thoughts and concerns on federally required assessments for the 2020-2021 school year; and

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WHEREAS, Because so many of our students have been separated from their school since March 2020, bringing students back in-person only to immediately begin state testing will have a detrimental effect on the goals of supporting their social and emotional well-being, mental health, and reconnection with the school community; while 77 percent of our 852 school districts are offering some in-person instruction, data show that more than a million students are still learning in fully remote environments; fewer than 200 Illinois school districts serving less than 200,000 students are currently able to provide fully in-person instruction to all students; Illinois students need their school and district administrators focused on resuming in-person instruction for the purposes of providing trauma-informed supports, increasing the quality of instruction, and rebuilding relationships between students and teachers; the administration of state assessments would take away from these critical endeavors that are foundational to

1 the recovery of our educational systems; and

2 WHEREAS, After hearing the concerns of district and school
3 leaders, teachers, families, and students, ISBE delayed its
4 testing windows in order to provide as much flexibility for
5 administration under socially distanced conditions; currently,
6 and in addition to supporting the academic, social, and
7 emotional needs of students, districts are utilizing time and
8 resources to ensure transportation and safe logistics for
9 testing; this time could be better spent coordinating
10 vaccination administration for educators and the larger
11 community and providing necessary supports for students; and

12 WHEREAS, Without a clear signal that the Department of
13 Education will permit an assessment waiver, districts will
14 continue to plan for the administration of assessments; this
15 is not the optimal use of their time or resources; and

16 WHEREAS, Illinois educators understand and believe in the
17 importance of assessment results, but the likely variability
18 in participation across the State will limit the comparability
19 and usefulness of the data at both the individual student and
20 student group levels; and

21 WHEREAS, The potential yet diminished benefits of using
22 incomplete state assessment data as a means of understanding

1 the scope of learning loss that may have occurred as a result
2 of the pandemic do not outweigh the significant burden that
3 the administration of state assessments would incur on our
4 students, families, teachers, and administrators; and

5 WHEREAS, Assessment, the practice of collecting evidence
6 about student learning to provide students with feedback and
7 to inform supports and instructional design, is still
8 critically important to helping students recover from the
9 pandemic; schools, districts, and teachers can and should
10 continue to conduct formative assessments at the local levels
11 to understand the impact of the pandemic on student learning
12 and provide holistic and individualized supports; and

13 WHEREAS, Accountability is an effective means of
14 identifying schools and students in the greatest need of
15 assistance; a second year without state assessments will
16 impact longitudinal data and accountability systems; however,
17 ISBE has the ability to continue to provide support to the
18 highest need schools and students and to leverage local data
19 sources to evaluate its progress; therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL
21 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we urge the U.S.
22 Department of Education, pursuant to section 8401(b) of the
23 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, to

1 offer states the option to waive the following assessment and
2 concomitant accountability and reporting requirements;
3 specifically the U.S. Department of Education should release
4 an expedited waiver application for:

5 (1) Assessment requirements in section 1111(b)(2)
6 covering all required assessments in school year
7 2020-2021;

8 (2) The requirement that a state annually meaningfully
9 differentiate all public school and to identify schools
10 for comprehensive and targeted support and improvement, as
11 required in sections 1111(c)(4) and 1111(d)(2)(C)-(D); and

12 (3) Those report card provisions related to
13 assessments and accountability in section 1111(h) that
14 would be based on data from the 2020-2021 school year; and
15 be it further

16 RESOLVED, That we believe that it is in the best interest
17 of students and educators for the U.S. Department of Education
18 to release an expedited waiver of assessment and
19 accountability requirements for the 2020-2021 school year.