



SR0266

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SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, In 1920, Illinois had 892 Black farmers, and
3 African Americans owned 14 percent of the nation's farmland;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, As of the 2017 USDA Agricultural Census, there
6 are 188 individually Black-owned farms which make up a
7 combined 40,412 acres; out of the 116,417 agricultural
8 producers in Illinois, 267 are Black and 115,896 are
9 Caucasian; and

10 WHEREAS, According to the USDA's National Statistics
11 Service, as of April 2019, Illinois had 72,000 farms;
12 Illinois' farmland covers 27 million acres, which is
13 approximately 75% of the state's total land area; and

14 WHEREAS, As farming has become a big business, it has
15 become one of the least diverse businesses in our state; the
16 pressure to consolidate that has reduced the ranks of farmers
17 for the past century is making any turnaround unlikely; and

18 WHEREAS, The number of Black farmers in Illinois appears
19 destined to eventually be reduced to zero; the numbers are
20 dwindling across much of the Midwest; and

1 WHEREAS, The scarcity of African American farmers stems
2 from our troubled history as well; racial discrimination
3 played a big role in driving Blacks off their land in southern
4 states; for sharecroppers, farming was associated with the
5 poverty and backbreaking labor of slavery; for those who owned
6 land, unequal treatment made it difficult to retain the
7 property and earn a living; as recently as the mid-1990s,
8 white farmers who agreed to sell crops would routinely get
9 better prices at market; and

10 WHEREAS, In a landmark legal settlement, the U.S.
11 Agriculture Department acknowledged that it had abused Black
12 farmers for generations when agents approved only a fraction
13 of financing requests, delayed loans until after the planting
14 season, and withheld other key payments; and

15 WHEREAS, Only in a few southern states have the ranks of
16 Black farmers shown a notable increase; therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL
18 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we urge the Illinois
19 Department of Agriculture to study the effects and the types
20 of land loss to Black farmers from post slavery until now; and
21 be it further

22 RESOLVED, That we call for state support and capacity

1 building for Black farming communities across Illinois and a
2 dedication to helping grow agriculture in rural, urban, and
3 suburban areas to meet food access demands and increase
4 economic resilience in vulnerable food desert communities; and
5 be it further

6 RESOLVED, That Black farmers can play a leading role in
7 our local healthy food system and create regional networks of
8 jobs, food, and opportunities; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
10 delivered to the Illinois Department of Agriculture and the
11 National Black Farmers Association.