



1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 80

2 WHEREAS, Article I, Section 11 of the Illinois Constitution
3 states "All penalties shall be determined both according to the
4 seriousness of the offense AND WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF RESTORING
5 THE OFFENDER TO USEFUL CITIZENSHIP (emphasis added); and

6 WHEREAS, Illinois is one of only 11 states that has life
7 without parole sentences and one of only 6 states where all
8 life sentences are without parole; and

9 WHEREAS, Thirty years ago only a handful of prisoners in
10 Illinois served sentences longer than 30 years; this year
11 approximately 4,000 Illinois prisoners have sentences of 30
12 years or more, including C number prisoners, amounting to about
13 10% of all Illinois prisoners; and

14 WHEREAS, In Illinois at least 500 people each year are
15 sentenced as lifers or long-term prisoners; and

16 WHEREAS, With the growth of truth in sentencing laws and
17 increased use of life without parole sentences, the number of
18 long-term prisoners will grow exponentially; and

19 WHEREAS, It costs at least one million dollars to confine a
20 person in prison for 30 years; and

21 WHEREAS, It is estimated that close to half of those lifers
22 and long-term prisoners will never be released from prison if
23 current policies stay in place; and

24 WHEREAS, The recidivism rate for long termers is the lowest
25 of any group of prisoners; and

26 WHEREAS, A large number of lifers and long-term prisoners
27 are sentenced under the accountability theory and not for the

1 actual commission of the crime, and some are first time
2 offenders; and

3 WHEREAS, Community crime prevention programs, not harsher
4 prison sentences are responsible for the decline in crime
5 rates; and

6 WHEREAS, Numerous innocent people have been wrongly
7 convicted in Illinois; and

8 WHEREAS, Many countries no longer impose sentences of life
9 without parole; therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
11 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
12 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that there is created the Long-Term
13 Prisoners Study Committee, hereinafter referred to as the
14 Committee, consisting of 17 members appointed as follows:

15 (1) Three members appointed by the President of the Senate;

16 (2) Two members appointed by the Minority Leader of the
17 Senate;

18 (3) Three members appointed by the Speaker of the House of
19 Representatives;

20 (4) Two members appointed by the Minority Leader of the
21 House of Representatives;

22 (5) One member appointed by the Attorney General;

23 (6) One member appointed by the Governor;

24 (7) One member appointed by the Cook County State's
25 Attorney;

26 (8) One member appointed by the Office of the Cook County
27 Public Defender;

28 (9) One member appointed by the Office of the State
29 Appellate Defender;

30 (10) One member appointed by the Office of the State's
31 Attorneys Appellate Prosecutor; and

32 (11) One member appointed by the Director of Corrections;

1 and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That the Department of Corrections shall provide
3 staff and administrative support to the Committee; and be it
4 further

5 RESOLVED, That the Committee shall study and examine issues
6 related to prisoners sentenced to life without parole and
7 prisoners sentenced to terms in excess of 30 years; and be it
8 further

9 RESOLVED, That the Committee in its deliberations shall
10 always give priority to public safety and the best use of State
11 funds; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the Committee shall hold public hearings and
13 present a report of its findings and recommendations to the
14 95th General Assembly before June 1, 2007.