



1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, According to a recent study by the Center for
3 Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University in Boston,
4 Massachusetts, there are 174,168 Illinois youth ages 16 to 24
5 years old and 98,908 youth ages 16 to 21 years old who have not
6 graduated from high school and are out of school; and

7 WHEREAS, This study outlines that in Illinois, of the
8 174,168 youth who are out of school without a high school
9 diploma, 50,877 are White, 74,645 are Hispanic, 42,294 are
10 Black, and 6,352 are listed as other; and

11 WHEREAS, The vast majority of Chicago area and downstate
12 Illinois youth who are out of school without a high school
13 diploma come from lower income areas; and

14 WHEREAS, The vast majority of these youth who are out of
15 school without a high school diploma see themselves as students
16 who want to return to school and earn a high school diploma,
17 but there are currently not enough options and opportunities
18 for many of these re-enrolled students; and

19 WHEREAS, A comprehensive system is needed for all students
20 - those in school and those who want to return to school, but
21 the school experience that will help "out of school students"
22 succeed when they re-enroll must be different; people learn in
23 different ways, and smaller schools offer a more personal,
24 flexible, and accountable curriculum that successfully
25 re-enrolls, teaches, and graduates these out of school
26 students; and

27 WHEREAS, Illinois employers are experiencing a shortage of
28 skilled workers, and these "re-enrolled students" could
29 provide the needed addition to the workforce needs of the
30 Illinois economy and Illinois businesses; and

1 WHEREAS, Eighty percent of prison inmates are students who
2 left school without a high school diploma and, as such, can
3 pose a problem in terms of crime and public safety to the
4 general public in their communities and neighborhoods; and

5 WHEREAS, Out-of-school students without a high school
6 diploma earn \$516,000 less over their lifetimes than people who
7 have a high school diploma and some college education; and

8 WHEREAS, The benefit to Illinois taxpayers is \$312,000 over
9 the lifetime of a "re-enrolled student" who returns to school
10 and earns a high school diploma in terms of that person paying
11 more taxes on his or her increased earnings as well as the
12 reduced social costs in terms of his or her utilizing welfare
13 services, mental health services, and other dependency
14 services, and being less likely to enter prison or incur other
15 costs related to crime; and

16 WHEREAS, There is significant research and program
17 experience to draw on and use to develop successful programs to
18 re-enroll, teach, and graduate students who left school before
19 earning a high school diploma; therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
21 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
22 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that there is created the "Task Force
23 on Re-enrolling Students Who Dropped Out Of School" in order to
24 examine and develop ways to address the growing issue of
25 students who left school before earning a high school diploma;
26 and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the purpose of the Task Force is to examine
28 policies, programs, and other issues related to developing a
29 variety of successful approaches using best program practices
30 to re-enroll, teach, and graduate students who left school

1 before earning a high school diploma and, in doing so, improve
2 community safety and the Illinois economy; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall be composed of the
4 following members: 8 legislators (2 of whom shall be appointed
5 by the President of the Senate, 2 of whom shall be appointed by
6 the Speaker of the House, 2 of whom shall be appointed by the
7 House Minority Leader, and 2 of whom shall be appointed by the
8 Senate Minority Leader); 1 representative of the State Board of
9 Education appointed by the State Superintendent of Education; 1
10 representative of the Department of Human Services appointed by
11 the Secretary of Human Services; 1 representative of the
12 Department of Children and Family Services appointed by the
13 Director of Children and Family Services; 1 representative of
14 the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity appointed
15 by the Director of Commerce and Economic Opportunity; 1
16 representative of the Illinois Community College Board
17 appointed by the President of the Illinois Community College
18 Board; 8 representatives from the public (4 of which should
19 come from schools/programs working with students who had left
20 school before earning a high school diploma and 4 other
21 appointees) appointed by the Governor, with one of these public
22 representatives serving as chairperson of the Task Force; and
23 be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the duties of the Task Force shall include
25 conducting a series of public hearings throughout the State to
26 discuss the impact of students who have left school without a
27 high school diploma on various regions of the State, completing
28 a review of data regarding students who have left school
29 without a high school diploma that allows for a comparison of
30 Illinois data both nationally and with other states in the
31 region and across the country, completing a review of various
32 financing and funding mechanisms used by other states,
33 counties, cities, foundations, and other financial funding
34 sources and producing a final report with recommendations to

1 the Governor and the General Assembly on ways and means to
2 address the challenge of re-enrolling students who have left
3 school without a high school diploma; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall issue an interim report
5 of its findings to the Governor and the General Assembly no
6 later than January 10, 2007; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall issue a final report by
8 January 10, 2008, and upon filing this report, the Task Force
9 is dissolved.