

1 AN ACT concerning courts.

2 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois is dedicated to the urgent  
3 task of strengthening and expediting the national defense under  
4 the emergent conditions which are threatening the peace and  
5 security of this nation;

6 WHEREAS, It is the considered judgment of the General  
7 Assembly that the citizens of Illinois who respond to their  
8 country's call to service are deserving of every benefit and  
9 protection; and

10 WHEREAS, It is imperative that State government recognize  
11 the State's citizens who have made the ultimate sacrifice to  
12 protect the peace and security of this nation; and

13 WHEREAS, The Illinois Court of Claims should be equipped to  
14 provide for and assist the survivors of fallen service members  
15 by increasing accessibility to the Court of Claims and  
16 providing outreach services to the community, which will serve  
17 to educate survivors as to their benefits and protections under  
18 State law; and

19 WHEREAS, By recognizing these sacrifices, the State of  
20 Illinois encourages its citizens to participate to the fullest  
21 extent in the national defense program and thereby heightens  
22 the contribution of our State to the protection of our heritage

1 of liberty and democracy; therefore

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Court of Claims Act is amended by adding  
5 Section 9.5 as follows:

6 (705 ILCS 505/9.5 new)

7 Sec. 9.5. Gold Star Families Assistance Program.

8 (a) Within the Court of Claims, there is established a Gold  
9 Star Families Assistance Program, which is charged with the  
10 responsibility of assessing the needs of and providing  
11 information to Illinois Gold Star Families with regard to  
12 claims filed pursuant to the Line of Duty Compensation Act.

13 (b) As used in this Section, "Gold Star Family" means the  
14 family members of an individual who was killed in the line of  
15 duty and who was employed or serving in a capacity defined in  
16 Section 2 of the Illinois Line of Duty Compensation Act.

17 (c) Toll-free helpline. The Gold Star Families Assistance  
18 Program shall include a toll-free helpline dedicated to  
19 families seeking information about the Line of Duty  
20 Compensation Act, including, but not limited to, the status of  
21 claims filed pursuant to that Act. The helpline phone number  
22 and information about the Gold Star Families Assistance Program  
23 shall be provided to each person filing a claim under the Line

1 of Duty Compensation Act.

2 (d) On or before January 1 of each year, the Court of  
3 Claims shall report to the Governor, both houses of the General  
4 Assembly, and the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs the  
5 following information:

6 (1) the number of claims filed with the Court of Claims  
7 pursuant to the Line of Duty Compensation Act ("LODCA");

8 (2) the number of LODCA claims approved for payment by  
9 the Court of Claims during the preceding calendar year;

10 (3) the number and status of LODCA claims pending in  
11 the Court of Claims; and

12 (4) other information as may be requested by the  
13 Governor.