

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 and Fallen Heroes Families Assistance
8 Program.

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

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

19 (c) Toll-free helpline. The Gold Star and Fallen Heroes
20 Families Assistance Program shall include a toll-free helpline
21 dedicated to families seeking information about the Line of
22 Duty Compensation Act, including, but not limited to, the
23 status of claims filed pursuant to that Act. The helpline phone

1 number and information about the Gold Star and Fallen Heroes
2 Families Assistance Program shall be provided to each person
3 filing a claim under the Line of Duty Compensation Act.

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

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

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

12 (3) the number and status of LODCA claims pending in
13 the Court of Claims; and

14 (4) other information as may be requested by the
15 Governor.