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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Illinois State government faces an integrity crisis that is as grave as the financial crisis that confronts our nation; and

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WHEREAS, The integrity crisis was precipitated by former Governor Rod Blagojevich, who, in January 2009 by virtue of the authority vested in the General Assembly by the Illinois Constitution, was impeached by the House and removed from office by the Senate following his conviction in a Senate trial presided over by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Illinois; the seriousness and public alarm regarding Blagojevich's misdeeds and abuse of power were amplified further by the fact that he was preceded in office by Governor George Ryan, who was convicted and imprisoned for wrongdoing during his time as an elected official; and

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WHEREAS, Governor Blagojevich, throughout his tenure as Governor, repeatedly stymied and obstructed bipartisan efforts to pass legislation strengthening the State's ethics laws and increasing government transparency; among the waylaid measures were those reforming the State pension systems and Procurement Code, strengthening revolving door prohibitions, and expanding government whistleblower protections; and

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1 WHEREAS, The legitimacy of democratic government is
2 dependent entirely upon the public's expectation that elected
3 officials will remain mindful of the sacred trust that has been
4 placed in them and act exclusively in the best interests of
5 their fellow citizens, free from any considerations of use of
6 their offices for personal advantage or gain; and

7 WHEREAS, It is imperative that lawmakers move swiftly to
8 put this dark period in our State's history behind us and take
9 all necessary steps to ensure that it is never repeated; to do
10 so will require legislators to immediately begin a review of
11 current State statutes, take public testimony, and determine
12 what additional measures should be enacted to reform Illinois
13 government and ensure that citizens receive the honest services
14 to which they are rightfully due from their public servants;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, We commend Governor Patrick Quinn's decision to
17 create the Illinois Reform Commission, the purpose of which is
18 to undertake a focused evaluation of both existing Illinois law
19 and the operational practices of the State of Illinois from the
20 perspective of ethics in government, proposing, as the
21 Commission deems appropriate, amendments to existing law; and

22 WHEREAS, Lawmakers stand ready to work with Governor Quinn,
23 reform advocates, and the citizens of Illinois to restore

1 integrity to State government; therefore, be it

2 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL
3 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
4 CONCURRING HEREIN, that there is created the Joint Committee on
5 Government Reform; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the Joint Committee shall consist of 16
7 members, 4 of whom shall be appointed by the President of the
8 Senate, 4 of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the
9 House of Representatives, 2 of whom shall be appointed by the
10 Minority Leader of the Senate, and 2 of whom shall be appointed
11 by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives; the
12 President of the Senate and Speaker of the House shall serve as
13 co-chairs of the committee; the Minority Leader of the Senate
14 and Minority Leader of the House, if they so choose, may serve
15 as co-vice chairs; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That the Joint Committee shall meet at the call
17 of the Speaker and President; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
19 presented to all Illinois Constitutional Officers, Illinois
20 Supreme Court Justices, and members of Governor Patrick Quinn's
21 Illinois Reform Commission.