



SJ0068

LRB096 13017 NHT 27191 r

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, In 2006, the federal Secretaries of State,  
3 Education, and Defense and the Director of National  
4 Intelligence joined together to take part in an initiative to  
5 dramatically increase the number of Americans learning and  
6 teaching foreign languages of critical need for reasons of  
7 national security and global competitiveness; and

8 WHEREAS, In 2008, the initiative, entitled the National  
9 Security Language Initiative, designated certain languages to  
10 be categorized as "Critical Need"; and

11 WHEREAS, The National Security Language Initiative was  
12 implemented on the notion that recognizes that "speaking  
13 another's language promotes understanding; conveys respect;  
14 strengthens our ability to engage foreign peoples and  
15 governments; and provides others with an opportunity to learn  
16 more about America and its people"; and

17 WHEREAS, In 2008, Arabic was one of the languages  
18 designated as a "Critical Need" language; and

19 WHEREAS, The National Security Language Initiative  
20 provides for federal funding for language instruction under  
21 Foreign Language Assistance Program grants; and

1           WHEREAS, In 2008, federal grants have been used to aid in  
2 instruction of Arabic in Illinois programs, such as grants  
3 totaling \$240,000 allowing for summer instruction for Chicago  
4 public school students to intensify their Arabic at the  
5 University of Chicago; and

6           WHEREAS, To date, this State still remains to be  
7 startlingly under-represented among Foreign Language Assistant  
8 Program grant recipients; and

9           WHEREAS, The State Board of Education also designates  
10 funding for an Arabic Language Initiative under its Arts and  
11 Foreign Language Education Grant Program; and

12           WHEREAS, In May 2008, Mayor Richard M. Daley announced that  
13 Chicago public schools were initiating a \$1,000,000 expansion  
14 of the Critical Languages Program; and

15           WHEREAS, Concerned local communities of this State have  
16 initiated a concerted effort since the creation of the National  
17 Security Language Initiative to propose the introduction of  
18 Arabic as a foreign language option for high school, junior  
19 high, and elementary school students; and

20           WHEREAS, The concerted effort has included numerous signed

1 petitions, town hall meetings, and numerous personal  
2 one-on-one meetings with principals, students, teachers,  
3 parents, and superintendents; and

4 WHEREAS, These concerned communities have continued their  
5 efforts to maintain the goal of building a competitive  
6 advantage for Illinois students in a changing global dynamic;  
7 and

8 WHEREAS, A few public schools in this State have already  
9 begun to offer Arabic as a foreign language, such as Lindblom  
10 Math & Science Academy, Lincoln Park High School, Roosevelt  
11 High School, Volta Elementary School, Durkin Park Elementary  
12 School, and Peck Elementary School; and

13 WHEREAS, Funding options, research, and community interest  
14 have shown Arabic to be a foreign language that will be a  
15 welcomed option in school districts, providing competitive  
16 advantage for students in this State; therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL  
18 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
19 CONCURRING HEREIN, that we encourage school districts in this  
20 State to explore the introduction of Arabic as a foreign  
21 language in their curriculum, particularly school districts  
22 that have constituencies with an interest in the instruction of

1 Arabic, through a transparent and collaborative process with  
2 the community that takes full advantage of State and federal  
3 funding resources; and be it further

4       RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
5 delivered to the school districts of this State.