



SR0290

LRB096 12936 NHT 26897 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

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

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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, that we encourage school
19 districts in this State to explore the introduction of Arabic
20 as a foreign language in their curriculum, particularly school
21 districts that have constituencies with an interest in the
22 instruction of Arabic, through a transparent and collaborative

1 process with the community that takes full advantage of State
2 and federal funding resources; and be it further

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