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1 HOUSE RESOLUTION 133

2 WHEREAS, Tourism is a crucial and growing component of the
3 Illinois economy; and

4 WHEREAS, It is an established State policy to recognize and
5 support the economic impact of tourism, particularly to Chicago
6 where the greatest potential economic impact for the State can
7 be enjoyed; and

8 WHEREAS, In order to dramatically increase the economic
9 impact of tourism, Choose Chicago has recently announced an
10 ambitious goal of 50 million annual visitors to Chicago and has
11 placed Chicago in the expected top 5 U.S. destinations for
12 international travel by 2020; and

13 WHEREAS, It is in the interest of the entire State of
14 Illinois to help reach that goal of 50 million annual visitors
15 to Chicago by 2020; and

16 WHEREAS, Increasing visitors to Chicago has a secondary
17 benefit of exposing those visitors to potential trips
18 throughout Illinois; and

19 WHEREAS, Most tourists to Illinois come from the Midwest as
20 the top 5 states providing visitors to Illinois in 2011 were

1 Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Missouri,
2 according to the Department of Commerce and Economic
3 Opportunity's 2011 Economic Impact of Tourism report; and

4 WHEREAS, Illinois hosted 93.3 million visitors in 2011, a
5 10% increase over 2010, fueled by an 11.8% increase in leisure
6 travel according to the same report; and

7 WHEREAS, Because most of our visitors come from the Midwest
8 now, the most likely source for finding additional tourists to
9 achieve the goal of 50 million annual visitors to Chicago is
10 from the states in the Midwest; and

11 WHEREAS, The residents of many smaller communities in the
12 Midwest who are the target market for tourists do not have
13 access to affordable, frequent, convenient flights to Chicago,
14 either because there isn't a nearby airport or because the
15 flights from their airport to Chicago are not affordable,
16 frequent, or convenient; and

17 WHEREAS, Driving more than 100 miles can be very
18 inconvenient, particularly due to the relatively high cost of
19 parking in Chicago (especially compared to the low-cost or
20 no-cost of parking in much of the Midwest) and the significant
21 traffic congestion around Chicago; and

1 WHEREAS, Many downstate communities with tourist
2 attractions do not have any air service at all, requiring an
3 alternative way of bringing tourists to their communities; and

4 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois has been a leader in
5 investing in Amtrak to provide more intercity passenger train
6 service, doubling the frequency of round-trips in 2006 and
7 investing State funds in improving the infrastructure of the
8 St. Louis-Springfield-Normal-Joliet-Chicago line; and

9 WHEREAS, Ridership on Amtrak service has broken records
10 every year for the last 5 years; and

11 WHEREAS, A majority of Amtrak riders on weekends, and a
12 significant amount on weekdays, are not business travelers but
13 are rather leisure travelers or traveling to visit family or
14 friends, according to a State-authorized 2011 survey of
15 passengers aboard the Milwaukee-Chicago Amtrak Hiawatha
16 service; therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
18 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
19 we fully support the goal of 50 million annual visitors to
20 Chicago by 2020; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That we recognize that the majority of these

1 additional tourists are likely to come from the Midwest; and be
2 it further

3 RESOLVED, That the easiest way to get tourists from the
4 Midwest to visit Chicago is to make it easier for tourists from
5 the Midwest to visit Chicago; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That we call upon all other stakeholders in the
7 tourism economy to recognize that offering more affordable,
8 frequent, convenient passenger train service, both through
9 expanding Amtrak and through new high speed rail connecting
10 midwest communities to Chicago is a crucial strategy to reach
11 our economic goal of 50 million annual visitors to Chicago by
12 2020.