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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success has documented the critical role higher education plays in economic recovery and growth, particularly in ensuring the State has an educated workforce to meet the needs of business and industry; and

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WHEREAS, The Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success recommends that the Board of Higher Education, in consultation with other State agencies for education, employment, and economic development, "increase the number of high-quality postsecondary credentials to meet the demands of the economy and an increasingly global society"; and

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WHEREAS, Illinois has committed to the goal that 60% of its workforce will hold a high-quality college credential by 2025 to ensure its economic future; and

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WHEREAS, Most recent projections from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce are that 70% of Illinois jobs will require postsecondary education by 2020; and

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WHEREAS, Currently, only 42.5% of the State's nearly 7 million working-age adults between the ages of 25 and 64 years

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1 hold at least a 2-year college degree; and

2 WHEREAS, There is a critical need for Illinois institutions  
3 of higher education to increase the number of postsecondary  
4 degrees in fields of critical skills shortages, such as  
5 healthcare, construction, computer technology, public safety,  
6 and mechanical fields; and

7 WHEREAS, Illinois' economic success requires providing  
8 college credentials aligned with current and future workforce  
9 needs at the State and regional levels; and

10 WHEREAS, Achieving workforce needs depends upon additional  
11 strategic State investment in higher education, along with  
12 improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of the higher  
13 education system; and

14 WHEREAS, Working age adults attempting to return to school  
15 to complete certificates and degrees in high-demand fields face  
16 many barriers to success; and

17 WHEREAS, The Illinois Council of Community College  
18 Presidents has recommended that the community college system be  
19 allowed to grant 4-year baccalaureate degrees for nursing and  
20 other applied career areas; and

1           WHEREAS, The development of postsecondary degree programs  
2 should be predicated on evidence of the needs of Illinois  
3 residents rather than institutional interests; and

4           WHEREAS, The Board of Higher Education has the statutory  
5 authority and responsibility to review all applications for new  
6 academic degree programs for public community colleges and  
7 universities; therefore, be it

8           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
9 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE  
10 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that the Board of Higher Education  
11 establish a Higher Education Commission on the Future of the  
12 Workforce; and be it further

13           RESOLVED, That the Commission shall be comprised of 11  
14 members, including one senator appointed by the President of  
15 the Senate, one senator appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
16 Senate, one representative appointed by the Speaker of the  
17 House of Representatives, one representative appointed by the  
18 Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, and the  
19 remaining 7 members appointed by the Board of Higher Education  
20 to represent a cross-section of the education, employment, and  
21 economic development communities, as well as experts in quality  
22 postsecondary degree creation; and be it further

1           RESOLVED, That the Commission's study shall include, but  
2 not be limited to the following:

3           (1) examining and analyzing current and projected  
4 workforce needs for each economic region of the State and  
5 postsecondary degree and credential production capacity  
6 and goals;

7           (2) identifying State, regional, and national partners  
8 available to support efficient and effective delivery of  
9 postsecondary credential and degree programs aligned with  
10 regional workforce needs;

11           (3) determining current policies and practices in  
12 Illinois being utilized among Illinois' public and private  
13 colleges and universities for partnerships for degree  
14 completion;

15           (4) examining opportunities for expanding  
16 postsecondary certificates and associate and baccalaureate  
17 completions using effective and efficient strategies and  
18 partnerships among high schools, technical schools,  
19 community colleges, and 4-year colleges and universities;

20           (5) developing distance and online learning, as well as  
21 competency-based credits to serve place-bound and adult  
22 learners, including military personnel and veterans;

23           (6) examining incentives for students to enter and  
24 complete degree programs in critical-needs areas,  
25 particularly aimed at underemployed and displaced workers;

26           (7) examining improvements in student advising,

1 including articulation, transfer, and acceptance of  
2 credits to streamline the education pipeline to the  
3 workforce;

4 (8) providing incentives, including financial  
5 assistance, for working adults and individuals with  
6 substantial college credit, but no degree, to complete  
7 college degrees;

8 (9) analyzing best practices implemented in other  
9 states for incentivizing certificate and degree  
10 completion, including incentives for students and for  
11 colleges and universities; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the Commission shall report to the General  
13 Assembly and the Governor 6 months from the formation of the  
14 Commission; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
16 delivered to the Governor, the chairperson of the Board of  
17 Higher Education, the chairperson of the Illinois Community  
18 College Board, the chairperson of the State Board of Education,  
19 the chairperson of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission,  
20 the chairperson of the Employment Security Advisory Board, and  
21 the president of each public and private college and university  
22 in the State.