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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success has documented the critical role that higher education plays in economic recovery and growth, particularly in ensuring that this 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 post-secondary 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 post-secondary education by 2020; and

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WHEREAS, Currently, only 42.5% of the State's nearly 7 million working age adults (25-64 years old) hold at least a

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1 2-year college degree; and

2 WHEREAS, There is a critical need for Illinois institutions
3 of higher education to increase the number of post-secondary
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 post-secondary degree programs
2 should be predicated on evidence of the needs of Illinois
3 residents rather than institutional interests; and

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

8 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL
9 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
10 CONCURRING HEREIN, that there is created the Higher Education
11 Commission on the Future of the Workforce within the Board of
12 Higher Education; 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; one representative appointed by the Minority Leader of
18 the House; and 7 members appointed by the Board of Higher
19 Education to represent a cross-section of the education,
20 employment, and economic development community, as well as
21 experts in quality post-secondary degree creation; and be it
22 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 post-secondary 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 post-secondary 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 post-secondary certificates and associate's and
17 baccalaureate completions using effective and efficient
18 strategies and partnerships between high schools,
19 technical schools, community colleges, and 4-year colleges
20 and universities;

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

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

1 (7) examining improvements in student advising,
2 including articulation, transfer, and acceptance of
3 credits to streamline education pipeline to the workforce;

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

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 submit a report to the
13 General Assembly and the Governor 6 months from the formation
14 of the 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 this State.