



SR1525

LRB099 18069 GRL 42856 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The economic competitiveness of the United States
3 and Illinois in the global economy requires a well-educated
4 workforce; and

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WHEREAS, Students in Illinois currently average \$28,984 in
6 student debt upon graduation, which significantly hinders
7 their ability to participate in the local economy; and

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WHEREAS, Current and future young people in the United
9 States and across Illinois should have the same opportunity
10 offered to those who went to college in previous generations,
11 including the ability to attend State colleges and universities
12 without taking on burdensome debt; and

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WHEREAS, In 2015, higher education is more important than
14 ever because it is an essential step to entering and remaining
15 in the middle class; and

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WHEREAS, Because of the importance of higher education, the
17 United States and state governments should expand the
18 opportunity to pursue and attain higher education to more
19 people than had that opportunity in the past; and

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WHEREAS, Public investment in higher education pays off, as

1 evidenced by the fact the G.I. Bill resulted in a 7-to-1 return
2 on investment for our national economy; workers with college
3 degrees also earn more money, pay more taxes, and rely less on
4 government services; and

5 WHEREAS, Student loan debt saddles the very students who
6 most depend on a college degree to level the economic playing
7 field with a burden that constrains career choices and hurts
8 the credit rating of students, prevents people from fully
9 participating in the economy by purchasing goods and services,
10 and threatens essential milestones of the American dream,
11 including the purchase of a home or car, starting a family, and
12 saving for retirement; and

13 WHEREAS, The Schatz-Schumer-Warren United States Senate
14 debt-free college resolution and the Grijalva-Ellison-Clark
15 United States House of Representatives debt-free college
16 resolution have gained national momentum in recent months and
17 has become central in the national dialogue around higher
18 education; and

19 WHEREAS, A national goal of debt-free college would include
20 significant federal aid to states, including Illinois;
21 therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL

1 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we urge Congress to
2 enact legislation that ensures that all students have access to
3 debt-free higher education, defined to mean having no debt upon
4 graduation from any public institutions of higher education;
5 increases support to states so that those states can increase
6 investments in higher education and bring down costs for
7 students; increases aid to students to help them cover the
8 total cost of college attendance without taking on debt;
9 encourages innovation by states and institutions of higher
10 education to increase efficiency, lower costs, and enable
11 speedy and less-costly degree completion; and reduces the
12 burden of existing student loan debt.