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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of The Bahamas is one of the oldest democracies in the western hemisphere; it has made important contributions to international efforts to promote peace, regional development, and solve the crisis of climate change; and

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WHEREAS, Since The Bahamas declared itself as an independent and sovereign nation on July 10, 1973, it has been a close friend of the people of the United States, with both countries sharing a strong advocacy of democracy, the rule of law, and the merits of an open, equitable market economy; and

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WHEREAS, The government of The Bahamas chose to open its diplomatic office for the Midwestern Jurisdiction in Illinois by officially establishing The Office of The Bahamas Honorary Consulate in Chicago on March 6, 2014; and

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WHEREAS, The Bahamas has deep cultural ties to the State of Illinois as exemplified by individuals and organizations such as the Honorable Michael C. Fountain who is a native Illinoisan and serves as Honorary Consul for The Bahamas; Bahamian National track champion, record holder, and Olympic finalist Pedrya Seymour who attends the University of Illinois; Jeffrey Crittenden who serves as Executive Chef of the Skyline Club of

1 Chicago; and the thriving Bahamas National Association of
2 Chicago; and

3 WHEREAS, The Bahamas has unrivaled foreign trade,
4 financial services, wealth management, and tourism
5 opportunities in the Caribbean region that could further
6 benefit the people of the State of Illinois; and

7 WHEREAS, The Bahamas and Illinois have committed to
8 enhanced bilateral cooperation and a deepening of social and
9 trade relations; and

10 WHEREAS, Baha Mar, an over \$4 billion investment and the
11 largest luxury resort in the western hemisphere with over 2200
12 rooms and suites in a multitude of world-class properties, is
13 scheduled to open on April 21, 2017 and is expected to attract
14 an additional 315,000 air passengers annually to The Bahamas;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, On March 23, 2017, the government of The Bahamas
17 entered into an unprecedented agreement with the United States
18 Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to regain Bahamian
19 control of Bahamian airspace; and

20 WHEREAS, Lynden Pindling International Airport located in
21 Nassau, The Bahamas is the fourth busiest airport in the

1 Caribbean and the main international gateway to The Bahamas;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, Chicago O'Hare International Airport is the
4 sixth-busiest airport in the world by passenger traffic, the
5 third-busiest airport in the United States, and the busiest
6 airport in the Midwest; and

7 WHEREAS, Five major airlines including Air Canada,
8 American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, JetBlue Airways, and United
9 Airlines provide passenger air travel between Illinois and The
10 Bahamas; and

11 WHEREAS, Direct flights from Chicago to The Bahamas are
12 only provided by a single carrier and those are offered only
13 once daily Monday through Friday and twice daily on Saturday
14 and Sunday; and

15 WHEREAS, The critical link that air travel provides between
16 Illinois and The Bahamas would be strengthened by increasing
17 the number of direct flights; and

18 WHEREAS, Strengthening the partnership between Illinois
19 and The Bahamas would produce increased economic development,
20 tourism, and investment opportunities for both Illinois and The
21 Bahamas; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
2 HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
3 reaffirm the commitment to enhanced bilateral cooperation and
4 deeper social and trade relations with the government and
5 people of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That we strongly encourage all airlines
7 operating between Illinois and The Bahamas to explore
8 increasing the amount of direct flights between Illinois and
9 The Bahamas; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That Air Canada, American Airlines, Delta Air
11 Lines, JetBlue Airways, and United Airlines commence earnest
12 discussions with the Office of The Bahamas Honorary Consulate
13 in Chicago as soon as practicable regarding increasing the
14 number of direct flights between Illinois and The Bahamas; and
15 be it further

16 RESOLVED, That Air Canada, American Airlines, Delta Air
17 Lines, JetBlue Airways, and United Airlines shall report to the
18 House of Representatives Transportation: Regulation, Roads and
19 Bridges Committee on the progress and ultimate outcome of those
20 discussions; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be

1 presented to the people of The Bahamas as an expression of our
2 continued commitment to our long-lasting partnership; and be it
3 further

4 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
5 delivered to Air Canada, American Airlines, Delta Air Lines,
6 JetBlue Airways, United Airlines, and The Bahamas Honorary
7 Consulate in Chicago.