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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The Constitution of the State of Illinois gives the State the primary responsibility for funding the cost of public education; however, the State currently only covers thirty-six percent of this cost, which ranks the State forty-seventh in the nation in terms of the percentage of state funding provided to schools; and

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WHEREAS, Rather than fulfilling its constitutional obligation, the State has shifted the primary responsibility for funding the cost of public education to local property taxpayers, with school districts receiving an average of fifty-six percent of their funds from local property taxes; Illinois ranks forty-ninth among the fifty states for its over-reliance on local property taxes to fund education; and

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WHEREAS, By relying on the property tax as the primary source of funding for schools, the State has created a disparity between property rich school districts and school districts without substantial property wealth; the existing funding disparity is unfair to the children of Illinois, who all deserve an equal opportunity to a quality education regardless of where they reside; and

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WHEREAS, If the State is to ever assume primary

1 responsibility for funding public education and resolve the
2 current dependence on the property tax and the funding
3 disparity between school districts, the State must either
4 increase an existing source of State revenue or create a new
5 revenue stream; and

6 WHEREAS, Taxpayers should not be asked to provide
7 additional resources to public schools and school districts
8 without the State improving the current systems of fiscal and
9 performance accountability in such a manner as to provide a
10 guarantee that new moneys would be well spent in ways likely to
11 improve schools and that taxpayers would be afforded
12 appropriate and understandable accountability for greater
13 investments in school improvement; therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL
15 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
16 CONCURRING HEREIN, that there is created the Accountable
17 Schools Task Force, which shall be facilitated by the State
18 Board of Education, to review and evaluate the complex issues
19 involving the fiscal and performance accountability of the
20 State's school districts and individual schools; and be it
21 further

22 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall consist of twenty-five
23 members as follows: one member appointed by the Speaker of the

1 House of Representatives; one member appointed by the President
2 of the Senate; one member appointed by the Minority Leader of
3 the House of Representatives; one member appointed by the
4 Minority Leader of the Senate; one member appointed by the
5 Governor; the Chairperson of the State Board of Education or
6 his or her designee; three members who are representatives of
7 the business community appointed by the Governor; four members
8 who are representatives of the education labor community, two
9 of whom shall be appointed by an organization representing
10 teachers who participate in collective bargaining and two of
11 whom shall be appointed by a different organization
12 representing teachers who participate in collective
13 bargaining; two members who are representatives of the
14 education management community appointed by an organization
15 representing school management; two members who are
16 representatives of a statewide child advocacy organization
17 appointed by the Governor; two members who are representatives
18 of a statewide organization of parents and teachers appointed
19 by the Governor; one member who is a mayor or village president
20 from the northeastern Illinois region appointed by an
21 organization representing mayors of northern Illinois; one
22 member who is a mayor or village president from downstate
23 Illinois appointed by an organization representing mayors of
24 southern Illinois; one member who is a representative of the
25 Mayor of the City of Chicago appointed by the Mayor of the City
26 of Chicago; and three members appointed at-large by a national

1 or regional organization with particular expertise in school
2 fiscal and performance accountability; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That following the appointment of all Task Force
4 members, the Task Force shall meet at the call of the Governor
5 and select a member to serve as Chairperson and shall meet at
6 the call of the Chairperson as necessary thereafter; and be it
7 further

8 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall have the following
9 duties and responsibilities: (1) to evaluate the State's
10 existing fiscal and performance accountability systems; (2) to
11 identify costs of mandates imposed on school districts and
12 individual schools; (3) to recommend a fiscal assessment
13 process that includes criteria for examining and evaluating the
14 current financial practices of all school districts and schools
15 and determining the adequacy and efficiency of internal
16 controls; (4) to recommend methods to improve and stabilize the
17 State's system of performance accountability; and (5) to
18 recommend methods by which the fiscal and performance
19 accountability systems are made more transparent and
20 understandable for parents of students and taxpayers; and be it
21 further

22 RESOLVED, That all Task Force meetings shall be open to the
23 public; the Task Force may solicit input from non-members of

1 the Task Force and any other sources deemed appropriate by the
2 State Board of Education; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That that the Task Force shall report its
4 findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by January
5 8, 2008; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
7 delivered to the Governor, the Chairperson of the State Board
8 of Education, the Mayor of the City of Chicago, and those
9 organizations responsible for appointing members to the Task
10 Force.