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LRB095 11875 NHT 37529 a

1                                    AMENDMENT TO SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 54

2            AMENDMENT NO. \_\_\_\_\_. Amend Senate Joint Resolution 54, AS  
3 AMENDED, by replacing everything after the heading with the  
4 following:

5            "WHEREAS, The provision of a free, appropriate public  
6 education for a student with a visual impairment can occur only  
7 with the proper concentrated services, equipment,  
8 appropriately certified staff, and access to education; and

9            WHEREAS, Children and youth who are visually impaired face  
10 unique and significant barriers related to their instruction  
11 that profoundly affect most aspects of the educational process,  
12 including the impact of ever changing technology and the world  
13 it encompasses; and

14            WHEREAS, Blindness and visual impairments are often  
15 considered secondary disabilities, thus the specialized

1 educational needs of the blind and visually impaired are rarely  
2 fully addressed; and

3 WHEREAS, Children and youth with visual impairments are  
4 guaranteed an education in the least restrictive setting,  
5 determined on an individual basis, meaning that they are  
6 entitled to be integrated as fully as possible into the regular  
7 classroom, as appropriate; and

8 WHEREAS, Full access to education depends upon an  
9 educational environment that utilizes the appropriate  
10 materials and properly and fully trained staff and provides for  
11 direct communication between staff, students, parents, and  
12 peers; and

13 WHEREAS, The Illinois School for the Visually Impaired  
14 should become the go-to facility for best teaching practices  
15 regarding programs for children with visual impairments and the  
16 statewide center for training, technical assistance, outreach,  
17 and specialized curriculum development; and

18 WHEREAS, The Illinois School for the Visually Impaired  
19 should include on-going training and technical assistance for  
20 itinerant, mainstream, and private school educators; and

21 WHEREAS, The Illinois School for the Visually Impaired

1 should include specific programming on visual impairments for  
2 teaching and rehabilitation professionals from both the State  
3 Board of Education and the Department of Human Services; and

4 WHEREAS, While unemployment in the nation continues to  
5 drop, the unemployment rate for people with visual impairments  
6 is over 70%; and

7 WHEREAS, There should be greater access to transitional  
8 services for students who are blind or visually impaired  
9 entering vocational rehabilitation services and employment;  
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Successful transitional programs may result in  
12 better services and jobs, knowledgeable self-advocates, and  
13 achievement of competitive outcomes; 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 Joint Task Force  
17 on Blind and Visually Impaired Educational Options, consisting  
18 of the following members, appointed as follows:

19 (1) the President of the Senate, the Minority Leader of  
20 the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives,  
21 and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives  
22 shall each appoint one member;

1           (2) the Governor shall appoint a parent representative  
2 from the Illinois School for the Visually Impaired and 3  
3 regional parent representatives, one each from northern,  
4 central, and southern Illinois;

5           (3) the following entities shall each appoint one  
6 member: the State Board of Education, the Department of  
7 Human Services, the Illinois School for the Visually  
8 Impaired, the Illinois Association of Regional  
9 Superintendents of Schools, the LightHouse for the Blind  
10 and Visually Impaired, the Illinois School for the Visually  
11 Impaired Alumni Association, the National Federation of  
12 the Blind of Illinois, the Illinois Council of the Blind,  
13 Early Intervention, the Illinois Association for Education  
14 and Rehabilitation, the Illinois Vision Leadership  
15 Council, the Phillip J. Rock Center, the Helen Keller  
16 National Center, the Illinois Committee of Blind Vendors,  
17 Illinois Parents of the Visually Impaired, the Blind  
18 Services Planning Council, the Illinois School for the  
19 Visually Impaired's Advisory Board, the Visual  
20 Disabilities education program at Northern Illinois  
21 University, and the Specialist in Low Vision and Blindness  
22 education program at Illinois State University; and be it  
23 further

24           RESOLVED, That the State representative and State senator  
25 who represent the districts that are home to the Illinois

1 School for the Visually Impaired shall serve as co-chairpersons  
2 of the Task Force; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That all members of the Task Force shall serve  
4 without compensation; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the duty of the Task Force is to undertake a  
6 comprehensive and thorough review of the education of and  
7 services available to the blind and visually impaired children  
8 of this State with the intent of making recommendations that  
9 would recognize the need for delivering full educational  
10 services to a blind or visually impaired student, ensure that  
11 schools have the most updated and adequate equipment to provide  
12 services to blind and visually impaired students, and recognize  
13 the need for teachers trained in the unique needs of blind and  
14 visually impaired students; recommending research-based  
15 methods and procedures to develop curricula for blind and  
16 visually impaired students; and providing a comprehensive  
17 review of the needs and operation of all educational entities  
18 providing services to students who are blind or visually  
19 impaired, including the Illinois School for the Visually  
20 Impaired; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Task Force should look towards states  
22 that have successful, independent, and adequate educational  
23 models for students with visual impairments, such as the

1 Washington State School for the Blind; and be it further

2       RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education and the  
3 Department of Human Services shall together administer and  
4 prepare all reports deemed necessary in conjunction with the  
5 Task Force's activities; and be it further

6       RESOLVED, That the Task Force may request assistance from  
7 any entity necessary or useful for the performance of the Task  
8 Force's duties; and be it further

9       RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall report its  
10 recommendations to the General Assembly on or before December  
11 31, 2008; and be it further

12       RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
13 delivered to the Governor, the State Board of Education, the  
14 Department of Human Services, the Illinois School for the  
15 Visually Impaired, the Illinois Association of Regional  
16 Superintendents of Schools, the LightHouse for the Blind and  
17 Visually Impaired, the Illinois School for the Visually  
18 Impaired Alumni Association, the National Federation of the  
19 Blind of Illinois, the Illinois Council of the Blind, Early  
20 Intervention, the Illinois Association for Education and  
21 Rehabilitation, the Illinois Vision Leadership Council, the  
22 Phillip J. Rock Center, the Helen Keller National Center, the

1 Illinois Committee of Blind Vendors, Illinois Parents of the  
2 Visually Impaired, the Blind Services Planning Council, the  
3 Illinois School for the Visually Impaired's Advisory Board, the  
4 Visual Disabilities education program at Northern Illinois  
5 University, and the Specialist in Low Vision and Blindness  
6 education program at Illinois State University."