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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Dedicated individuals, volunteers, communities, and organizations have contributed their time, talents, and efforts to working towards alleviating homelessness in Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, The purpose of this resolution aims to secure continual and extended federal funding so that State-wide programs, organizations, support systems, and initiatives can continue their work of improving the quality of life for people experiencing homelessness in Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, Congress enacted the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) which, along with other provisions, authorized an estimated \$11.72 billion in additional federal funding for States to utilize in support of programs, organizations, and initiatives working towards reducing homelessness and the factors that cause it; and

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WHEREAS, The Obama Administration awarded approximately \$80 million in grants throughout Illinois to support existing initiatives to reduce homelessness, such as the Continuum of Care programs that provide relief services including permanent and temporary housing for individuals experiencing homelessness and work to alleviate the causes of homelessness

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1 by supplying additional services such as job training, health
2 care, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, and
3 child care; and

4 WHEREAS, A national survey conducted in 2007 by the
5 National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty estimated that
6 between 2.3 and 3.5 million people experience homelessness each
7 year and anticipated a dramatic increase in the population of
8 Americans experiencing homelessness over the next several
9 years; and

10 WHEREAS, The National Alliance to End Homelessness found
11 that in 2007 an estimated 15,487 people in Illinois experienced
12 homelessness, and that 44% of those homeless persons have
13 families; and in another report released the following year,
14 the United States Conference of Mayors indicated that cities
15 witnessed an average increase of 12% of residents experiencing
16 homelessness since 2007; and

17 WHEREAS, The National Alliance to End Homelessness
18 reported that the current economic situation will force an
19 additional 1.5 million people into homelessness during the next
20 two years, and the National Coalition for the Homeless released
21 a report in July 2009 revealing that the recent national
22 foreclosure crisis has caused homelessness to rise
23 dramatically; and

1 WHEREAS, Even though the current economic climate has
2 caused Illinois to face severe unprecedented budget
3 shortfalls, the generous grants awarded by President Obama have
4 prevented even more drastic budget cuts that would have been
5 implemented had this increase in funding not been available;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Illinois legislators will approach the Fiscal
8 Year 2011 budget with as much caution as the Fiscal Year 2010
9 budget, yet it is estimated that lagging revenues and continued
10 spending pressures will result in an even larger deficit, and,
11 without an infusion of funding from borrowing or another
12 source, the State's fiscal health will continue to decline; and

13 WHEREAS, Multiple and varied groups throughout Illinois
14 are actively engaging in efforts to ameliorate the factors that
15 contribute to homelessness, as well as the condition of
16 homelessness itself; and

17 WHEREAS, Illinois programs such as West Suburban PADS
18 annually assist over 850 people, including more than 92
19 families, and over 158 children by offering more than 12,170
20 nights of emergency shelter, 39,178 meals, 22,180 days and
21 nights of housing, and re-housing or preventing the loss of
22 housing for 352 men, women, and children; and

1 WHEREAS, Illinois programs such as West Suburban PADS rely
2 on federal funding as the primary source for 5 housing programs
3 that provide supportive services such as: basic needs (showers,
4 laundry, transportation passes, identification cards, and
5 telecommunications equipment to facilitate long-term
6 employment), case management services, benefits coordination,
7 housing location and retention, employment services, medical
8 clinics, and legal clinics; and

9 WHEREAS, Illinois programs such as Inner Voice have
10 received federal grants from government initiatives such as the
11 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to bolster their
12 programs which include supportive services that annually
13 assist over 1,400 people who are homeless or at immediate risk
14 of becoming homeless and provide shelter and beds for over
15 1,000 homeless individuals or families in need of emergency
16 shelter during the year; and

17 WHEREAS, Illinois programs serving the downstate area,
18 such as M.E.R.C.Y, annually provide over 30 families with
19 transitional living and permanent supportive housing services
20 and report a sharp increase in inquiries for services, a
21 substantial increase in referrals from neighboring communities
22 for supportive services, and identify children (there are
23 currently over 413 homeless children in Springfield, Illinois

1 public schools) as the most underserved group by federal
2 efforts intended to alleviate homelessness; and

3 WHEREAS, Additional federal funding would allow Illinois
4 programs such as West Suburban PADS, Inner Voice, and
5 M.E.R.C.Y. to continue their efforts on a larger scale by
6 providing them with the resources to reach more people, to
7 provide more services, and thus to contribute on a much broader
8 scale to alleviating both the problems and the factors that
9 cause homelessness; therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
11 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
12 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we respectfully urge Congress
13 and all members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation to
14 support the continuation and extension of federal funding
15 directed towards eliminating the condition of homelessness in
16 Illinois that was made available by Government initiatives such
17 as the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 and
18 grants by President Obama; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That after adoption, suitable copies of this
20 resolution shall be delivered by the Clerk of the Illinois
21 House of Representatives to each member of the Illinois
22 Congressional Delegation and to President Obama.