HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Since December 2009, serious questions have been raised about Illinois Department of Corrections programs to grant early releases to prisoners assigned to Departmental custody, and despite good-faith efforts by members of the General Assembly, these questions have not yet been answered by the administration of current Governor Pat Quinn; and

WHEREAS, Investigative reports indicate that under one of the Department's early release policies, the "Meritorious Good Time (MGT) Push" early-release program, at least 1,745 prisoners may have been released from Departmental custody after serving terms as short as 11 days of Departmental custody; and

WHEREAS, Department of Corrections prisoners who were granted "Meritorious Good Time Push" early release include prisoners who had previously been convicted of serious and life-threatening criminal offenses, such as murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, sex crimes, and weapons violations; and

WHEREAS, Investigative reports indicate that at least 129 prisoners released from Departmental custody under the "Meritorious Good Time Push" early-release program had been tracked as of January, 2010, as having violated, subsequent to

their release, the terms of their release, and as of January 2010 had been returned to Departmental custody; and

WHEREAS, Investigative reports indicate that about one-half of the 129 former prisoners granted "Meritorious Good Time Push" early release committed violent criminal offenses, including unlawful use of a weapon and domestic or aggravated battery, subsequent to their release, which according to the these reports was why this group of ex-prisoners were returned to custody as of January 2010; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Corrections has not been able to share, with the General Assembly or other investigators, any additional information about further early-release prisoners who may have been returned to custody after January 2010; and

WHEREAS, It is not clear how the "Meritorious Good Time Push" policy was conceived, finalized, or implemented; the General Assembly and other investigators have not been able to obtain definitive answers to these questions; and

WHEREAS, The process used to generate, implement, and respond to the so-called "Meritorious Good Time Push" early release policy raises significant concerns about the current governance structure and responsiveness to the public welfare of the Illinois Department of Corrections and the overall

safety of the Illinois public; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that there is created a nonpartisan Early Release Investigative Committee, which shall have the duty of inquiring into, investigating, and reporting to the Illinois House on the early release programs implemented by the Department in 2009 and 2010, including, but not limited to, the "Meritorious Good Time Push" program; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Committee shall contain 10 members, of whom 5, including one co-chairperson, will be appointed by the Speaker of the House and 5, including one co-chairperson, will be appointed by the House Minority Leader; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Committee is instructed to invite and hear public testimony from executive-level leadership personnel of the Department of Corrections on the implementation and consequences of these Departmental early release policies; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Committee shall receive staff support as necessary from the employees and contractors of the Illinois House of Representatives; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Committee shall report to the Illinois House no later than May 1, 2010 on its findings and the current state of the investigation, as of the date of the report, into the early release programs implemented by the Illinois Department of Corrections in 2009 and 2010; and be it further

RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this Preamble and Resolution be presented upon adoption to the Speaker of the Illinois House and to the Illinois House Minority Leader.