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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The initiative that was to become Grow Your Own was started by the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, a community organizing group working in a low-income Latino neighborhood; and

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WHEREAS, After launching a Parent Mentor program in the 1990s, the Logan Square Neighborhood Association observed that many of the participating parents wanted to become teachers but could not afford college; the Association recognized this as an opportunity to further develop community-parent-school relations; and

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WHEREAS, The Logan Square Neighborhood Association partnered with a faculty member from Chicago State University and was awarded a federal Teacher Quality Enhancement grant to launch Nueva Generacion, the precursor to Grow Your Own; the goal of the new program was to prepare teachers who knew the language and culture of the students in Logan Square's classrooms; and

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WHEREAS, At the same time, Action Now, formerly Illinois ACORN, began to realize that their problem was not only recruiting teachers to the North Lawndale schools but also retaining good teachers; Action Now decided to tackle the goal

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1 of improving teacher quality and retention by creating a new
2 coalition, the Chicago Learning Campaign; and

3 WHEREAS, The Logan Square Neighborhood Association was the
4 first of many community organizations to join the campaign to
5 "grow" teachers from local residents, including
6 paraprofessionals, community leaders, and parents, thus
7 creating the solution to the high rates of teacher turnover in
8 their community; and

9 WHEREAS, The campaign was later joined by the TARGET Area
10 Development Corporation in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood,
11 Kenwood Oakland Community Organization from the mid-South
12 Side, and Southwest Organizing Project in the Gage Park/Chicago
13 Lawn neighborhood; and

14 WHEREAS, In 2004, the organizers successfully advocated
15 for a Grow Your Own Teacher Education Act; in 2005, the program
16 received State funding and became Grow Your Own Illinois, a
17 non-profit organization; and

18 WHEREAS, Grow Your Own Illinois partnered with the Illinois
19 State Board of Education to develop the initiative statewide;
20 the organization was also responsible for brokering additional
21 partnerships among community organizations, local school
22 districts, and 4-year degree-granting universities; and

1 WHEREAS, In 2010, Grow Your Own Illinois was transferred to
2 the Illinois Board of Higher Education, where the organization
3 has been diligently working with the agency to improve the
4 program; therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
6 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
7 we show our continued support for Grow Your Own Illinois'
8 commitment to providing quality teachers from high-need
9 communities who want to remain in their community; and be it
10 further

11 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
12 presented to Grow Your Own Illinois as a symbol of our esteem
13 and respect.