



HR0509

LRB099 12472 GRL 35849 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, Governor Rauner has called for a bold, pragmatic  
3 new approach to criminal justice, correctly noting that our  
4 prison system is significantly overcrowded and the corrections  
5 budget is far too large; and

6           WHEREAS, Governor Rauner has created the Illinois State  
7 Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform to  
8 deliberate on the most fundamental questions of criminal  
9 justice policy, with a mandate to provide recommendations to  
10 the General Assembly by December of 2015; and

11           WHEREAS, Governor Rauner's Executive Order establishing  
12 the Commission reaffirmed that, under Article I, Section 11 of  
13 the Illinois Constitution, sentencing statutes must embrace  
14 the twin goals of prescribing penalties commensurate with the  
15 seriousness of the offense and restoring offenders to useful  
16 citizenship; and

17           WHEREAS, The Commission's task is to reduce the State's  
18 prison population by 25% over the next 10 years, from the  
19 current 49,000 prisoners to a more manageable 35,000 prisoners;  
20 and

21           WHEREAS, The growth of the prison population to such

1 unsustainable figures stems from several factors, including 2  
2 policy decisions by previous General Assemblies: the abolition  
3 of parole in 1979 and the elimination in 1998 of the ability to  
4 earn good conduct credit in prison for a large number of  
5 offenses, which triggered far lengthier sentences for inmates  
6 than had previously been the case; and

7 WHEREAS, The lack of any sentence review by a parole board  
8 or a judge for inmates sentenced after 1979 has left thousands  
9 of prisoners who no longer pose any threat to public safety and  
10 are truly remorseful for their crimes stuck in prison at  
11 tremendous taxpayer cost; and

12 WHEREAS, The elimination of the ability to earn good  
13 conduct in prison for a large number of offenses effectively  
14 doubled the sentences for those offenses, creating a major cost  
15 driver for taxpayers; and

16 WHEREAS, In order to bring our prison capacity and the  
17 Illinois Department of Corrections budget under control, we as  
18 a State must find a safe, reasonable, and intelligent method to  
19 release some prisoners earlier than their original sentence  
20 length that considers their changed circumstances and remorse,  
21 as well as the impact on victims and communities, while  
22 allowing for healing and reconciliation whenever possible; and

1           WHEREAS, Illinois' large prison population forces  
2 difficult budgetary decisions, including the reduction of  
3 programs that facilitate rehabilitation; and

4           WHEREAS, Rehabilitation is possible for offenders,  
5 particularly youthful offenders and offenders who receive  
6 educational programming; and

7           WHEREAS, Without some sort of sentence review process  
8 implemented, Illinois will not be able to meet the Governor's  
9 visionary and pragmatic goal of reducing our prison population  
10 by 25% over the next 10 years; therefore, be it

11           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
12 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we  
13 congratulate Governor Rauner on his leadership and vision in  
14 criminal justice reform; and be it further

15           RESOLVED, That we call upon the members of the Illinois  
16 State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform to  
17 deliberate and develop a 21st century method of implementing a  
18 sentencing review regime that alleviates taxpayers of the  
19 burden of housing and feeding inmates that no longer pose any  
20 threat to public safety and are truly remorseful for their  
21 crimes; and be it further

1           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
2 delivered to the Governor and the members of the Illinois State  
3 Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform.