

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois' Women, Infants, and
3 Children (WIC) Program is a successful program and is
4 nationally recognized for its success in meeting the needs of
5 Illinois' needier citizens; and

6 WHEREAS, The success of this program can be directly
7 related to the partnership of equals that has existed from
8 the beginning between the Illinois Department of Human
9 Services and the food retailers of this State; and

10 WHEREAS, In the late 1980's Illinois was included in a
11 five state investigation of WIC fraud conducted by the Office
12 of the Inspector General of the United States Department of
13 Agriculture; and

14 WHEREAS, This investigation highlighted the existence of
15 substantial fraud in the redemption of negotiable WIC food
16 benefits and the need for aggressive measures to identify and
17 eliminate this fraud; and

18 WHEREAS, Much of the fraud was occurring in places not
19 served or under-served by traditional food retailers; and

20 WHEREAS, The Department decided that administrative and
21 criminal sanctions were unlikely to effectively combat this
22 fraud; and

23 WHEREAS, The Department decided upon a course of
24 establishing State-run WIC Food Centers to provide WIC items
25 directly to clients in areas not served or under-served by
26 traditional food retailers; and

27 WHEREAS, The State continues to establish these State-run
28 WIC stores despite the fact that WIC fraud in areas not
29 served or under-served by traditional food retailers is well
30 under control; and

1 WHEREAS, These State-run stores are now being established
2 in areas well-served by traditional food retailers; and

3 WHEREAS, These traditional food retailers are being
4 placed at an economic disadvantage by these unnecessary and
5 noncompetitive State-run stores; and

6 WHEREAS, The Illinois Department of Human Services has
7 failed to be responsive to repeated requests by
8 representatives of the Illinois retail community to establish
9 criteria to govern future openings of State-run stores; and

10 WHEREAS, The effect is a substantial disincentive for
11 food retailers to continue to invest in historically
12 under-served areas; and

13 WHEREAS, Illinois food retailers and their employees who
14 participate in the WIC program are disadvantaged by State-run
15 WIC stores; and

16 WHEREAS, This results in fewer employment opportunities
17 for residents of these areas and lost jobs for existing
18 employees; and

19 WHEREAS, The Department's continued unresponsiveness to
20 the concerns of their food retailing partners threatens to
21 undermine the continued success of the Illinois WIC program;
22 therefore be it

23 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
24 NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
25 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that the Illinois Department of
26 Human Services is required to immediately enact a moratorium
27 on existing and future construction of State-run WIC stores
28 until it has established criteria governing the conditions
29 under which it will build new State-run stores and has
30 submitted these criteria to the Illinois General Assembly for
31 its consideration and approval; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this Resolution be
2 delivered to the Secretary of Human Services.