



SR0168

LRB102 17691 MST 23624 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Illinois is a rich agricultural state, home to
3 over 1 million farmers and over 72,000 farms that grow fruits
4 and vegetables and raise livestock; and

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WHEREAS, Almost 50% of all land in the United States is set
6 aside for farming, including 75% of all land in Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, Farming is a vital part of the Illinois economy
8 as it generates over \$19 billion each year; and

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WHEREAS, Farmers generally do not turn a profit from their
work until they have been in the sector for several years,
which makes this necessary profession a risky endeavor; and

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WHEREAS, Student loan debt is on the rise, totaling over
\$1.5 trillion and creating an additional barrier for young
farmers to make a living, leading many young people to steer
away from farming as a profession; and

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WHEREAS, The number of beginning farmers fell 20% between
2007 and 2012; and

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WHEREAS, The average age of farmers in the United States
is continually rising, climbing to over 58 in 2012 from 49 in

1 1945, which means young farmers are disappearing from the
2 economy; and

3 WHEREAS, The United States will see 66% of its
4 farmer-owned land needing a transfer in ownership within the
5 next 25 years; the United States also only added 1,220 young
6 operators to its farming economy, which means there are not
7 enough new farmers to handle the transfer of land that will
8 need to take place; and

9 WHEREAS, Adding farmers to the Public Service Loan
10 Forgiveness Program will create a pathway for young people
11 with student debt to succeed in agriculture; and

12 WHEREAS, Farmers are critical to our nation's well-being
13 as they produce the food we eat, steward nearly half the
14 country's land, and support rural economies; therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL
16 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we believe farming is
17 an integral public service and that farmers constitute public
18 service professionals; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That we urge the U.S. Congress to expand the
20 Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program so that it includes
21 farming as an applicable career for loan forgiveness; and be

1 it further

2 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
3 delivered to the President of the United States, the U.S.
4 Senate Majority Leader, the U.S. Senate Minority Leader, the
5 U.S. Speaker of the House, the U.S. House of Representatives
6 Minority Leader, and all members of the Illinois Congressional
7 Delegation.