



1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Termination of parental rights and subsequent  
3 adoption of minor children fails to recognize the importance to  
4 children of maintaining ties to siblings and is a severing of  
5 all sibling contact; and

6 WHEREAS, There are over 500,000 children in foster care in  
7 the United States, 55% to 69% have siblings, 30% have 4 or more  
8 siblings; and

9 WHEREAS, Only 26 states address the sibling relationship in  
10 legislation; 61% of children with siblings are placed with at  
11 least one sibling; this is good news; and

12 WHEREAS, Only 38% of children with siblings are placed with  
13 all of their siblings; current estimates indicate that 75% of  
14 sibling groups end up living apart after they enter foster  
15 care; and

16 WHEREAS, The policy of the State of Illinois mandates that  
17 contact be maintained between siblings pre-termination while  
18 they are in foster care or youth in care and provides for  
19 possible contact post majority via the Illinois Adoption  
20 Registry and Medical Information Exchange; and

21 WHEREAS, The General Assembly recognizes that generally it  
22 is in the best interests of children to maintain continuing  
23 contact after termination of parental rights; and

24 WHEREAS, The General Assembly recognizes efforts to  
25 maintain sibling bonds will diminish the negative impact  
26 termination of parental rights has on sibling relationships;  
27 and

28 WHEREAS, The General Assembly recognizes the challenges in

1 providing continuing contact among siblings once parental  
2 rights have been terminated; and

3 WHEREAS, The General Assembly recognizes that the  
4 importance of maintaining continuing contact among siblings  
5 warrants further study and consideration to develop policies  
6 and programs which best address the needs of children affected  
7 by the severing of sibling ties; therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL  
9 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
10 CONCURRING HEREIN, that within 90 days after the adoption of  
11 this joint resolution, there shall be created a Sibling  
12 Post-Adoption Continuing Contact Governor's Joint Task Force  
13 to study and make recommendations regarding post-termination  
14 sibling contact; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the Governor's Joint Task Force shall  
16 consist of 20 members appointed as follows: four legislative  
17 members, one each appointed by the President of the Senate, the  
18 Minority Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of  
19 Representatives, and the Minority Leader of the House of  
20 Representatives; 15 members appointed by the Governor as  
21 follows: one member from each of the Department of Children and  
22 Family Services' six Regional Youth Advisory Boards; one  
23 Statewide Youth Advisory Board alumnus; three members from the  
24 Adoption Advisory Council; three members from the Statewide  
25 Foster Care Council; and two Youth Advisory Board Coordinators;  
26 and the Director of Children and Family Services or his or her  
27 designee; all of whom shall serve without compensation; and be  
28 it further

29 RESOLVED, That the President of the Senate and the Speaker  
30 of the House of Representatives shall each designate one member  
31 to serve as co-chairs of the Joint Task Force; and that the  
32 Task Force shall meet as often as necessary to accomplish its

1 objectives, but at least four times; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That the Joint Task Force shall examine issues  
3 including, but not limited to: (1) establishing policies and  
4 programs regarding post-adoption contact that serve the best  
5 interests of children and respect the rights of adoptive  
6 parents, (2) determining the appropriate forum for hearing  
7 disputes in individual cases, and (3) to study and make  
8 recommendations to the General Assembly regarding continuing  
9 sibling contact post-adoption including, but not limited to,  
10 visitation, contact via telephone, and contact via mail  
11 including e-mail; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the Joint Task Force shall hold public  
13 hearings on the subject of post-adoption contact; and be it  
14 further

15 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall make recommendations  
16 regarding rights of children to maintain continuing contact  
17 with siblings post-termination of parental rights and  
18 post-adoption and shall deliver to the General Assembly and the  
19 Governor a final report with its recommendations within one  
20 year of the effective date of the creation of the Joint Task  
21 Force.