



1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The Illinois Business Enterprise Program for the
3 Blind is a federally-funded program that offers management
4 opportunities in the food service industry to individuals who
5 are legally blind; and

6 WHEREAS, The program is an entrepreneurial employment
7 opportunity for the legally blind; after completing a six-month
8 training course, certified graduates of the program operate
9 vending facilities throughout the State and average more than
10 \$40,000 a year in earnings; and

11 WHEREAS, The federal Business Enterprise Program for the
12 Blind was created by the Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1936, and the
13 Illinois program began in 1950; and

14 WHEREAS, There are currently over 110 vending facilities
15 run by blind vendors serving Illinoisans across the State; and

16 WHEREAS, Many blind vendors rely on vending machines to
17 make a living; and

18 WHEREAS, In April 2004, Governor Blagojevich released a
19 plan for corporate sponsorship of State-run vending machines,
20 which in essence will raise the costs of soda products for
21 blind vendors by limiting purchasing choices; and

22 WHEREAS, Illinois Business Enterprise Program blind
23 vendors oppose this policy, and believe that the Governor's
24 plan would violate Illinois and federal law by limiting the
25 placement and operation of vending facilities administered by
26 the legally blind; and

27 WHEREAS, In April 2004, the Chairman of the Illinois
28 Committee of Blind Vendors, John Gordon, walked 225 miles from

1 Chicago to Springfield in protest of such policy and its impact
2 on the blind community; and

3 WHEREAS, In August 2005, the Governor's office again
4 contacted the blind vendors confirming that the State was
5 moving forward with the policy of allowing corporate
6 sponsorship for State-run vending machines; and

7 WHEREAS, In response, the blind vendors were purported to
8 stage a protest in front of the James R. Thompson Center on
9 August 24, 2005, but have agreed to negotiate in good faith
10 with the Governor's office on August 25, 2005; therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
12 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
13 we urge Governor Blagojevich to reverse his policy
14 recommendations and allow the blind vendors to continue current
15 practice; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be presented to
17 Governor Blagojevich and the Chairman of the Illinois Committee
18 of Blind Vendors, John Gordon.