

1 AN ACT concerning people living in poverty.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Commission on the Elimination of Poverty Act.

6 Section 5. Legislative Findings. It is the goal of the
7 State of Illinois that all people be free from poverty.

8 The preamble to the Constitution of the State of Illinois
9 states that the elimination of poverty and inequality are among
10 the core goals of our State government. The Illinois Human
11 Rights Act states that the public policy of the State of
12 Illinois is "to promote the public health, welfare and safety
13 by protecting the interest of all people in Illinois in
14 maintaining personal dignity, in realizing their full
15 productive capacities, and in furthering their interests,
16 rights and privileges as citizens of this State". The State of
17 Illinois is a party to all international human rights treaties
18 signed and ratified by the United States.

19 Illinois is one of the wealthiest states in the United
20 States, yet it has one of the highest rates of poverty and
21 extreme poverty in the Midwest. The poverty level in 2007 was
22 \$20,620 or less per year for a family of 4 and \$10,310 or less
23 per year for a family of 4 in extreme poverty. In 2006 just

1 under 1,400,000 people residing in Illinois were living in
2 poverty and over 687,000 people residing in Illinois were
3 living in extreme poverty. There are people living in extreme
4 poverty in every Illinois county.

5 Full participation in civic life cannot be achieved without
6 those things that protect and preserve human dignity and make
7 for a healthy life, including adequate nutrition and housing,
8 meaningful work, safe communities, health care, and education.

9 Illinois has no comprehensive plan for the elimination of
10 poverty.

11 Section 10. Commission on the Elimination of Poverty. The
12 Commission on the Elimination of Poverty is created. The
13 purpose of the Commission is to comprehensively address poverty
14 in Illinois consistent with international human rights
15 standards. The initial goal of the Commission is to develop a
16 poverty elimination strategic plan to reduce extreme poverty in
17 Illinois by 50% or more by 2015. In developing the overall
18 strategic plan, and in working toward the goal of reducing
19 extreme poverty in Illinois by at least 50% by 2015, the
20 Commission shall address, at a minimum, all of the following:

- 21 (1) Access to safe, decent and affordable housing.
- 22 (2) Access to adequate food and nutrition.
- 23 (3) Access to affordable and quality health care.
- 24 (4) Equal access to quality education and training.
- 25 (5) Dependable and affordable transportation.

1 (6) Access to quality and affordable child care.

2 (7) Opportunities to engage in meaningful and sustainable
3 work that pays a living wage.

4 (8) The availability of adequate income supports.

5 The strategic plan shall include specific policy and fiscal
6 recommendations and a timeline for each stage of implementation
7 for each recommendation. For each recommendation, the
8 Commission shall identify in measurable terms the actual or
9 potential impact. The Commission may review and may make
10 comments and recommendations on existing or proposed programs,
11 policies, administrative rules, and statutes that have an
12 impact on poverty in Illinois and, in particular, people living
13 in extreme poverty.

14 Section 15. Members. The Commission on the Elimination of
15 Poverty shall be composed of no more than 26 voting members
16 including 2 members of the Illinois House of Representatives,
17 one appointed by the Speaker of the House and one appointed by
18 the House Minority Leader; 2 members of the Illinois Senate,
19 one appointed by the Senate President and one appointed by the
20 Senate Minority Leader; one representative of the Office of the
21 Governor appointed by the Governor; one representative of the
22 Office of the Lieutenant Governor appointed by the Lieutenant
23 Governor; and 20 public members, 4 of whom shall be appointed
24 by the Governor, 4 of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of
25 the House, 4 of whom shall be appointed by the House Minority

1 Leader, 4 of whom shall be appointed by the Senate President,
2 and 4 of whom shall be appointed by the Senate Minority Leader.
3 It shall be determined by lot who will appoint which public
4 members of the Commission. The public members shall include a
5 representative of a service-based human rights organization; 2
6 representatives from anti-poverty organizations, including one
7 that focuses on rural poverty; 2 individuals who have
8 experienced extreme poverty; a representative of an
9 organization that advocates for health care access,
10 affordability and availability; a representative of an
11 organization that advocates for persons with mental illness; a
12 representative of an organization that advocates for children
13 and youth; a representative of an organization that advocates
14 for quality and equality in education; a representative of an
15 organization that advocates for people who are homeless; a
16 representative of a statewide anti-hunger organization; a
17 person with a disability; a representative of an organization
18 that advocates for persons with disabilities; a representative
19 of an organization that advocates for immigrants; a
20 representative of a statewide faith-based organization that
21 provides direct social services in Illinois; a representative
22 of an organization that advocates for economic security for
23 women; a representative of an organization that advocates for
24 older adults; a representative of a labor organization that
25 represents primarily low and middle-income wage earners; a
26 representative of a municipal or county government; and a

1 representative of township government. The appointed members
2 shall reflect the racial, gender, and geographic diversity of
3 the State and shall include representation from regions of the
4 State experiencing the highest rates of extreme poverty.

5 The following officials shall serve as ex-officio members:
6 the Secretary of Human Services or his or her designee; the
7 Director of Corrections or his or her designee; the Director of
8 Healthcare and Family Services or his or her designee; the
9 Director of Human Rights or his or her designee; the Director
10 of Children and Family Services or his or her designee; the
11 Director of Commerce and Economic Opportunity or his or her
12 designee; the State Superintendent of Education or his or her
13 designee; the Director of Aging or his or her designee; the
14 Director of Public Health or his or her designee; and the
15 Director of Employment Security or his or her designee. The
16 State Workforce Investment Board, the African-American Family
17 Commission, and the Latino Family Commission shall each
18 designate a liaison to serve ex-officio on the Commission.

19 Members shall serve without compensation, but, subject to
20 the availability of funds, public members may be reimbursed for
21 reasonable and necessary travel expenses connected to
22 Commission business.

23 Commission members shall be appointed within 60 days after
24 the effective date of this Act. The Commission shall hold its
25 initial meeting within 30 days after at least 50% of the
26 members have been appointed.

1 The representative of the Office of the Governor and the
2 representative of a service-based human rights organization
3 shall serve as co-chairs of the Commission.

4 At the first meeting of the Commission, the members shall
5 select a 7-person Steering Committee that includes the
6 co-chairs.

7 The Commission may establish committees that address
8 specific issues or populations and may appoint individuals with
9 relevant expertise who are not appointed members of the
10 Commission to serve on committees as needed.

11 Under the leadership of the Office of the Governor, subject
12 to appropriation, the Department of Human Services shall
13 provide administrative support to the Commission.

14 Section 20. Meetings; reports. The full Commission shall
15 meet at least annually. The Steering Committee shall meet at
16 least quarterly. In addition, it may hold up to 4 public
17 hearings to assist in the development of the strategic plan.
18 The Commission shall also consider written comments for the
19 purpose of developing the strategic plan.

20 The Commission shall issue an interim report on its
21 activities and recommendations to the constitutional officers
22 and to the General Assembly on or before March 1, 2009. The
23 strategic plan shall be adopted by the Commission not later
24 than January 1, 2010 and sent to the constitutional officers
25 and to the General Assembly. Following the adoption of the

1 strategic plan, the Commission shall continue to meet and issue
2 annual reports by March 1st of each year on the implementation
3 of the strategic plan.

4 The Commission shall hold at least one public hearing prior
5 to the issuance of each annual report.

6 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
7 becoming law.