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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The series of debates between Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln in their 1858 bid for a United States Senate seat from Illinois is a significant example of the role of public discussion and debate of issues by candidates before the electorate; and

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WHEREAS, 2008 will mark the 150th anniversary of what are now seen as the greatest political debates in the United States in the nineteenth century, leading as they did to the eventual election of Abraham Lincoln to the office of President of the United States; and

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WHEREAS, The 7 Illinois communities that hosted the original debates, Ottawa, Freeport, Jonesboro, Charleston, Galesburg, Quincy, and Alton, meeting together as the Lincoln-Douglas Debates Sesquicentennial Collation and with the assistance of the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition, have and are making coordinated and comprehensive plans for fitting commemorative activities during the Sesquicentennial year, including: (i) traveling museum exhibits, (ii) a program of Lincoln and Douglas portrayers to present background on the debates with a modern political context as a means of explication for today's citizens that is to be presented in the 7 debates cities, plus Springfield, Chicago, and Bement, (iii)

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1 a coordinated calendar of activities to be promulgated to the
2 general public through a single brochure and a single website,
3 (iv) the issuance of commemorative collector coins, and (v) the
4 hosting of a commemorative national high school debate
5 tournament; and

6 WHEREAS, Several State agencies, the Abraham Lincoln
7 Presidential Library and Museum, the Governor's Rural Affairs
8 Council, the Illinois Bureau of Tourism, the Illinois Historic
9 Preservation Agency, as well as several non-governmental
10 organizations, both national and State, the Lincoln-Douglas
11 Society, the Stephen A. Douglas Association, the Abraham
12 Lincoln Association, the National Forensic League, the
13 Illinois High School Association, and the Illinois Speech and
14 Theater Association, have already engaged in assisting the
15 Lincoln-Douglas Debates Sesquicentennial Collation in planning
16 activities for the Sesquicentennial year; and

17 WHEREAS, A well-coordinated series of activities and
18 programs during 2008 will serve as preliminary attractions for
19 tourism in and to Illinois in anticipation of the 2009
20 programming being planned for the bicentennial of Abraham
21 Lincoln's birth; therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
23 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE

1 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that the Illinois Department of
2 Commerce and Economic Opportunity shall be designated as the
3 agency within the State's executive branch to work with the
4 Lincoln-Douglas Debates Sesquicentennial Collation for the
5 purposes of:

6 1. Further planning and implementation of
7 Sesquicentennial activities, and

8 2. Recommending to the Illinois General Assembly such
9 budget and funding requests as shall be deemed appropriate
10 to ensure the smooth implementation of the previously
11 developed, as well as any future, plans for commemorating
12 the Sesquicentennial of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates in
13 Illinois; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to
15 all of the communities, agencies, and non-governmental
16 organizations identified within it, as well as to all of the
17 constitutional officers of the State of Illinois, and the
18 Governor's Illinois Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.