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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are pleased to honor Rafael Mendez Jr. on his
4 work as the homeless liaison for the Waukegan School District;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, Rafael Mendez Jr. was born October 14, 1958 in
7 Bayamon, Puerto Rico, the second of five children of Rafael and
8 Ruth Mendez; he was educated in Waukegan public schools and
9 received a General Education Degree in 1978; he has worked as a
10 dishwasher, apparel store salesman, grocery clerk,
11 carpenter/plastering apprentice, and metal heat treating tech;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, He now works for the Waukegan School District,
14 where he has been a truant officer, security officer, and
15 residency officer, and currently holds the position of homeless
16 program liaison; and

17 WHEREAS, Since 2002, he has worked extensively with the
18 homeless students of Waukegan; his duties include:

19 (1) identifying the homeless population and
20 coordinating activities, entities, and agencies that
21 benefit homeless students;

22 (2) ensuring that homeless children and youth enroll in

1 and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in the
2 schools they are eligible to attend, including Head Start
3 and preschool programs;

4 (3) initiating referrals to health care, dental,
5 mental health, and other appropriate services;

6 (4) informing parents or guardians of homeless
7 children and youth about the available educational and
8 related opportunities and providing them with meaningful
9 ways to participate in the education of their children;

10 (5) promoting awareness of the educational rights of
11 homeless children and youth by posting public notices in
12 schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens;

13 (6) advising parents, guardians, and any unaccompanied
14 youth of the mediation process involving enrollment
15 disputes and fully informing them of procedures for
16 accessing all transportation services required by the
17 McKinney-Vento Act; and

18 (7) allocating funds to provide school uniforms,
19 backpacks, school supplies, access to field trips, outdoor
20 education, and assistance with summer school fees; and

21 WHEREAS, The endless giving of his time and dedication to
22 homeless students goes well beyond his assigned duties; he
23 organized "Coats 4 Kids" in 2002, resulting in thousands of
24 donations of new winter coats, hats, and gloves by public and
25 private corporations and employee groups from surrounding

1 communities; and

2 WHEREAS, In 2004, he was presented with a certificate of
3 appreciation from the Illinois State Board of Education in
4 recognition of exemplary service to the Illinois
5 McKinney-Vento Homeless Student Programs; and

6 WHEREAS, In addition to his valuable work, he has kept
7 alive his love for music as a guitar player, songwriter,
8 singer, and recording artist, with frequent performances
9 throughout Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, His wife, Rachelle, also works for the students of
12 Waukegan, as a third grade teacher; he is an active member of
13 the Trinity Christian Center in Zion and is quite proud of the
14 fact that he is a lifelong "home-grown" resident of Waukegan;
15 therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
17 NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
18 we honor and thank Rafael Mendez Jr. for his hard work and
19 dedication to the homeless students of Waukegan, and commend
20 him for for the many ways in which he has enriched the lives of
21 the people of Illinois; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
2 presented to Rafael Mendez Jr. as a symbol of our respect and
3 esteem.