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SENATE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The Illinois Film Production Services Tax Credit  
3 was established in order "to preserve and expand the existing  
4 human infrastructure for the motion picture industry in  
5 Illinois" and "to promote and encourage the training and hiring  
6 of Illinois residents who represent the diversity of the  
7 Illinois population"; the credit is calculated as a percentage  
8 of salaries paid to Illinois residents and payments made to  
9 Illinois vendors, with an additional credit available when the  
10 production company employs residents of high-poverty or  
11 high-unemployment areas; and

12           WHEREAS, Forty Acres and a Mule Filmworks, owned by  
13 renowned filmmaker Spike Lee, who is perhaps best known for his  
14 honest and compelling treatments of race in America, including  
15 "Do the Right Thing" and "Malcolm X", has applied for a Film  
16 Production Services Tax Credit for eligible expenses it expects  
17 to incur while producing the motion picture "Chiraq"; and

18           WHEREAS, Lee's film will be set in the Southside Chicago  
19 neighborhood of Englewood, a predominantly African-American  
20 community where unemployment stands at 21.3%, significantly  
21 above the national, State, and city averages; the production is  
22 expected to employ nearly 3,000 extras, 100 crew members, and  
23 20 interns, most of whom will be residents of Englewood and

1 surrounding neighborhoods; contracts for services with local  
2 vendors will also benefit the homeowners, businesses,  
3 churches, and schools whose properties will make up 90% of the  
4 film's locations; and

5 WHEREAS, Illinois law requires companies applying for the  
6 Film Production Services Tax Credit to file diversity plans  
7 that include specific hiring goals for minority individuals and  
8 women and goals for contracting with vendors certified as  
9 disadvantaged business enterprises; the applicant must  
10 demonstrate a good-faith effort toward achieving those goals;  
11 and

12 WHEREAS, The production of "Chiraq" not only promises to  
13 employ, train, and impart valuable job experience to residents  
14 of a community buffeted by unemployment, depressed property  
15 values, and a chronic lack of investment, but to shine a  
16 spotlight on the scourge of violent crime that helps perpetuate  
17 the cycle of poverty and economic neglect and claims the lives  
18 of hundreds of fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, and  
19 brothers and sisters each year in Chicago; and

20 WHEREAS, Communities such as Englewood need better  
21 statistics, not better semantics, a commitment to people, not  
22 perceptions, and a focus on public safety and the public good,  
23 not merely public relations; the name "Chiraq" is a shocking

1 but honest acknowledgement of the fear, pain, and hopelessness  
2 too many Illinoisans experience daily; and

3 WHEREAS, Spike Lee seeks to depict in art the human toll of  
4 violence in high-poverty neighborhoods and communities of  
5 color and to challenge society's acceptance of the unacceptable  
6 in its forgotten corners, a commendable goal in and of itself;  
7 therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL  
9 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we urge the Department  
10 of Commerce and Economic Development to award an Illinois Film  
11 Production Services Tax Credit to Forty Acres and a Mule  
12 Filmworks, as long as it meets the requirements of the tax  
13 credit program, in the belief that the filming of "Chiraq" in  
14 Chicago will result in a positive economic impact on the State  
15 in general and on disadvantaged, high-unemployment communities  
16 in particular; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
18 delivered to the director of the Illinois Department of  
19 Commerce and Economic Development and the director of the  
20 Illinois Film Office.