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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, In the 2005-2006 school year, over 322,000 children with disabilities were served in special education programs across Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, The number of children in special education programs has risen 5.4% in the last 5 years, and special education accounts for approximately 23% of all State education spending; and

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WHEREAS, The federal government has established a goal of reimbursing 40% of the costs of special education incurred by school districts, but it currently provides only 18% of costs nationally and only 14% in Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, Illinois has failed for decades to update reimbursement rates for special education costs, with the last reimbursement rate set in 1973 for special education orphanage tuition, in 1985 for special education personnel, in 1978 for special education private tuition, in 1976 for special education summer school, and in 1965 for special education transportation; and

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WHEREAS, Illinois has continued to prorate special education mandated categoricals at less than 100%, with the

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1 FY07 budget prorating these mandated categoricals at 97%; and

2 WHEREAS, Even if Illinois fully funded mandated
3 categoricals at 100%, this would still only represent partial
4 funding, as the reimbursement rates are severely outdated; and

5 WHEREAS, Illinois school districts currently spend an
6 estimated \$1 billion from their own general education funds to
7 meet the unreimbursed costs of special education services that
8 are mandated by federal and State laws and administrative
9 rules; and

10 WHEREAS, Special education continues to represent a
11 growing financial burden on school districts as the need for
12 services increases while State and federal funding fails to
13 increase along with that need; therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL
15 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
16 CONCURRING HEREIN, that a task force shall be created to study
17 current special education funding needs and to make
18 recommendations as to how the State can increase special
19 education funding and ease the financial burden on school
20 districts; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the task force shall consist of the State

1 Superintendent of Education (or his or her designee) plus 16
2 members appointed as follows: the House Majority Leader and the
3 House Minority Leader shall each appoint one representative,
4 the Senate President and the Senate Minority Leader shall each
5 appoint one senator, and these 4 leaders shall each appoint 3
6 public members representing the interests of special education
7 administrators and services, school districts, and disability
8 advocates; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the task force shall be facilitated by the
10 State Board of Education; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the task force shall report its findings and
12 recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by
13 January 1, 2008; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
15 transmitted to the State Superintendent of Education.