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1                                    AMENDMENT TO HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 43

2            AMENDMENT NO. \_\_\_\_\_. Amend House Joint Resolution 43 by  
3 replacing everything after the heading with the following:

4            "WHEREAS, Over 2 million Illinois residents receive  
5 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits;  
6 this number includes older adults, young children, people with  
7 disabilities, and working families; and

8            WHEREAS, Over 60,000 food-insecure Illinois residents  
9 enroll or re-enroll in the SNAP program every month; and

10            WHEREAS, The SNAP program is an important component of  
11 Illinois' economy that generates over \$3 billion in annual  
12 spending; and

13            WHEREAS, Prior to October of 2010, the overwhelming  
14 majority of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

1 benefits were distributed on the 1st of the month in Illinois;  
2 and

3 WHEREAS, Due to the SNAP distribution schedule, customers  
4 were relegated to shopping in crowded stores with elevated  
5 security, stores were unable to offer a high level of customer  
6 service due to the size of the crowds, customers who shopped  
7 later in the month found empty store shelves and diminished  
8 access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and employees saw their  
9 hours cut; and

10 WHEREAS, The narrow SNAP distribution schedule caused  
11 enormous operational issues for Illinois grocers and  
12 retailers, especially for those businesses that operated in  
13 areas with a high density of customers that purchased food with  
14 SNAP funds; and

15 WHEREAS, The SNAP distribution schedule also created  
16 operational issues for food banks, which experienced an  
17 increase in families in need at the end of the month when SNAP  
18 benefits ran out; and

19 WHEREAS, In October of 2010, after many meetings with  
20 representatives of the grocery industry and non-profit groups  
21 that have an interest in food access for low-income residents,  
22 the Illinois Department of Human Services instituted a change

1 in how SNAP benefits were distributed to Illinois residents;  
2 and

3 WHEREAS, In order to relieve the pressure off of businesses  
4 and customers at the 1st of the month, a large number of SNAP  
5 customers were shifted from the 1st of the month to the 4th,  
6 7th, and 10th of the month over the period of one year with  
7 great success; and

8 WHEREAS, The Department of Human Services currently issues  
9 SNAP benefits on the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 8th, 10th, 11th, 14th,  
10 17th, 19th, 21st, and 23rd days of the month; and

11 WHEREAS, The Department of Human Services has decided to  
12 shrink the SNAP distribution dates to the first 10 days of the  
13 month; and

14 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Agriculture  
15 (USDA), which controls the funding for the SNAP program, sent a  
16 letter to each state encouraging states to stagger SNAP  
17 distribution throughout the month; and

18 WHEREAS, This change goes in the opposite direction of the  
19 advocacy position taken by the USDA and the movement of other  
20 states in recent years, changing their systems to stagger SNAP  
21 benefits throughout the month; and

1           WHEREAS, Neither grocers nor poverty and food advocates  
2 believe that technology should dictate policy and that more  
3 efficient solutions should be achieved to avoid hunger;  
4 therefore, be it

5           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
6 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE  
7 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that the Task Force on Hunger and the  
8 Efficient Distribution of SNAP Benefits is created; and be it  
9 further

10           RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall consist of the  
11 following 10 members, appointed as follows:

12           (1) four legislators, appointed one each by the  
13 President of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, the  
14 Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Minority  
15 Leader of the House of Representatives;

16           (2) the Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human  
17 Services or his or her designee;

18           (3) one person appointed by the Governor to represent a  
19 state-wide association exclusively representing retailers;

20           (4) one person appointed by the Governor to represent a  
21 state-wide association exclusively representing grocers;

22           (5) one person appointed by the Governor to represent a  
23 non-profit organization focusing on advancing justice and

1 opportunity for low-income Illinois residents;

2 (6) one person appointed by the Governor to represent a  
3 non-profit organization focusing on ending poverty; and

4 (7) one person appointed by the Governor to represent a  
5 food bank that serves a county with over 2 million residents;  
6 and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the co-chairs of the Task Force shall invite  
8 representatives of the USDA and software contractors to  
9 participate in the Task Force; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the designee of the Speaker of the House of  
11 Representatives and the designee of the Senate President shall  
12 serve as co-chairs of the Task Force; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the members of the Task Force shall be  
14 appointed no later than 30 days after the effective date of  
15 this resolution; the members of the Task Force shall not  
16 receive compensation; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Department of Human Services shall  
18 provide administrative support to the Task Force; and be it  
19 further

20 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall prepare a report that  
21 details how SNAP benefits can be distributed more evenly

1 throughout the month without increasing hunger in the State of  
2 Illinois and shall submit this report to the Governor and the  
3 General Assembly by October 1, 2013; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That the Task Force, upon issuing the report, is  
5 dissolved effective October 1, 2013."