



HR0689

LRB104 20942 LAW 34742 r

1

HOUSE RESOLUTION

2

WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives wish to congratulate the members and coaching staff of the Illinois State University football team, the Redbirds, for their historic and remarkable performance during the 2025-2026 season, culminating in an appearance in the NCAA Division I Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) National Championship game; and

9

WHEREAS, Under the visionary leadership of Head Coach Brock Spack, the winningest coach in program history and a proud native of Rockford, the Redbirds demonstrated unparalleled resilience and determination; and

13

WHEREAS, Following a challenging mid-season stretch, the Redbirds players galvanized their efforts to win four consecutive road playoff games, a feat never before accomplished in the history of the FCS, earning them the well-deserved title of "Road Warriors"; and

18

WHEREAS, This unprecedented playoff run included a stunning 29-28 upset of the top-seeded North Dakota State University football team, the Bison, secured by a two-point conversion catch by fullback Scotty Presson Jr. from quarterback Tommy Rittenhouse; and

22

1           WHEREAS, On January 5, 2026, at FirstBank Stadium in  
2 Nashville, Tennessee, the Redbirds overcame a 14-point  
3 fourth-quarter deficit against the Montana State University  
4 football team, the Bobcats, sending the FCS championship game  
5 to overtime for the first time in FCS history; and

6           WHEREAS, Several individual Redbirds achieved historic  
7 milestones this season, including senior quarterback Tommy  
8 Rittenhouse, who set single-season program records for passing  
9 yards (3,568), completions (334), and touchdowns (40); and

10           WHEREAS, Wide receiver Daniel Sobkowicz solidified his  
11 legacy as one of the program's greatest players with 40 career  
12 touchdown receptions, while freshman Dylan Lord emerged on the  
13 national stage with a career-high 13 catches and 161 yards in  
14 the title game; and

15           WHEREAS, Running back Victor Dawson proved his dominance  
16 with four consecutive 100-yard rushing performances during the  
17 playoffs, and linebacker Tye Niekamp provided First-Team  
18 All-American leadership for a defense that personified the  
19 "family mentality"; and

20           WHEREAS, The Redbirds excelled not only on the gridiron  
21 but also in the classroom, setting an in-season team GPA

1 record during this historic run, proving themselves to be true  
2 student-athletes and exceptional representatives of Illinois  
3 State University and the Bloomington-Normal community; and

4 WHEREAS, The unwavering support of the "Redbird Nation",  
5 including the Big Red Marching Machine and thousands of fans  
6 who traveled to Nashville, provided a vibrant and boisterous  
7 atmosphere that showcased the spirit of the State of Illinois  
8 to a national audience of millions; therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
10 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
11 we congratulate the players and coaching staff of the Illinois  
12 State University football team, the Redbirds, and the entire  
13 Illinois State University Athletics Department on their  
14 historic 2025-2026 season and the team's status as NCAA  
15 Division I Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) National  
16 Runner-Up; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
18 presented to Illinois State University President Dr. Aondover  
19 Tarhule, Head Coach Brock Spack, and the members of the  
20 Redbirds football team as an expression of our esteem and  
21 respect.