



SJ0050

LRB104 16130 LAW 29475 r

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, In 2006, the federal Secretaries of State,
3 Education, and Defense, and the Director of National
4 Intelligence launched the National Security Language
5 Initiative to increase the number of Americans learning and
6 teaching foreign languages of critical importance to national
7 security and global competitiveness; and

8 WHEREAS, The National Security Language Initiative was
9 founded on the recognition that speaking another's language
10 promotes understanding and conveys respect for other countries
11 and cultures, strengthens the ability of the United States to
12 engage foreign peoples and governments, and provides others
13 with an opportunity to learn more about America and its
14 people; and

15 WHEREAS, In 2008, the federal government designated Arabic
16 as a "Critical Need Language"; and

17 WHEREAS, Arabic is a global language spoken by hundreds of
18 millions of people and is one of the six official languages of
19 the United Nations; and

20 WHEREAS, Arabic is central to cultural, economic, and
21 diplomatic engagement worldwide, yet remains far less

1 available than other world languages in U.S. K-12 education;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, Expanding Arabic instruction helps build both
4 linguistic and intercultural competence, preparing students to
5 be more informed, productive, and compassionate global
6 citizens in a world where understanding and connection across
7 cultures is essential; and

8 WHEREAS, Over the past 15 years, global events, including
9 sustained U.S. diplomatic, economic, and security engagement
10 in the Middle East and North Africa, have only heightened the
11 strategic value of Arabic proficiency; and

12 WHEREAS, The U.S. federal government continues to reaffirm
13 Arabic as a critical language through programs such as the
14 National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y), the
15 Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program, and other
16 National Security Education Program grants, which provide
17 immersive and virtual opportunities for Arabic study; and

18 WHEREAS, The Department of Defense, through the Defense
19 Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) and
20 the Language Flagship, continues to support pathways to
21 professional-level proficiency in Arabic and other critical
22 languages, reflecting awareness of enduring national security

1 and diplomatic needs; and

2 WHEREAS, The 2017 National Security Strategy emphasized
3 the importance of cultural, religious, and language
4 understanding as vital tools for American statecraft,
5 underscoring the role of foreign languages in advancing U.S.
6 interests abroad; and

7 WHEREAS, Illinois was among the first states in the nation
8 to establish a State Seal of Biliteracy that included the
9 Arabic language, enacted by Public Act 98-0560 and codified in
10 Section 2-3.157 of the School Code, to recognize high school
11 graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in
12 English and one or more additional languages, thereby
13 encouraging language study and honoring multilingual
14 achievement; and

15 WHEREAS, The Illinois State Board of Education supports
16 world language instruction through its Arts and Foreign
17 Language Education Grant Program, and Illinois has enacted a
18 two-year world language high school graduation requirement
19 beginning with students who enter ninth grade in the 2028-2029
20 school year, thereby strengthening multilingual education
21 opportunities for Illinois students; and

22 WHEREAS, The Chicago Arabic Teachers Council, established

1 more than a decade ago as a collaborative initiative among
2 educators, universities, and cultural institutions, has served
3 as a leading professional network and community of practice
4 for Arabic language teachers across Illinois and beyond,
5 promoting excellence in instruction, curriculum development,
6 and intercultural understanding in K-12 education; and

7 WHEREAS, The Chicago Arabic Teachers Council's
8 collaborations have historically included partnerships with
9 the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and DePaul
10 University, demonstrating broad support from higher education
11 leaders across the State for advancing Arabic language
12 education and teacher professional development; and

13 WHEREAS, Arabic is one of the world languages offered
14 within the International Baccalaureate (IB) framework, and the
15 inclusion of Arabic language instruction in IB programs within
16 Illinois public and private schools enhances students' access
17 to globally recognized credentials, strengthens college and
18 career readiness, and reflects the State's commitment to
19 preparing globally competent graduates; and

20 WHEREAS, Supporting the expansion of Arabic language
21 programs within the IB continuum, including the Primary Years,
22 Middle Years, and Diploma Programs, aligns with Illinois'
23 educational goals of multilingualism,

1 international-mindedness, and academic excellence; and

2 WHEREAS, The 96th General Assembly unanimously adopted
3 Senate Joint Resolution 68 during the 2009-2010 legislative
4 session, encouraging school districts in Illinois to explore
5 the introduction of Arabic as a foreign language option in
6 their curriculum, making many of the same points that remain
7 true today, 15 years later; therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL
9 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF
10 REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING HEREIN, that we encourage school
11 districts in the State of Illinois to explore the introduction
12 of Arabic as a foreign language option in their curriculum,
13 particularly through transparent and collaborative processes
14 that make full use of available state and federal resources;
15 and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
17 delivered to the school districts of the State of Illinois.