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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, With the advent of the railroad in the 1820s, many Americans held a vision of binding the nation together through the construction of a railroad across the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific; and

WHEREAS, The State of Illinois recognizes the importance of honoring efforts that provide common benefit and promote opportunity for all its people; and

WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Pacific Railroad Act in 1862 to provide federal support for the building of the first transcontinental railroad; and

WHEREAS, The Central Pacific Railroad Company started building in Sacramento, California and continued east across the Sierra Nevada Mountains, while a second company, the Union Pacific Railroad, built westward from the Missouri River near the Iowa-Nebraska border; and

WHEREAS, Building the first major national transportation infrastructure necessitated the employment of thousands of workers, many of them Chinese and Irish immigrants, Mormons, Native Americans, Free Blacks, and others who worked together to construct the railroad; and

1 WHEREAS, The Transcontinental Railroad required the
2 building of over 50 bridges and trestles and 15 tunnels through
3 the most challenging terrain; and

4 WHEREAS, United States industrialists recruited thousands
5 of Chinese workers to assist in the construction of the
6 railroad; these laborers, who made up to 80 percent of the
7 western workforce, were paid substandard wages and faced
8 grueling hours and extremely harsh conditions in order to lay
9 hundreds of miles of track; and

10 WHEREAS, The First Transcontinental Railroad was completed
11 on May 10, 1869 by the joining of the two tracks with a
12 symbolic "golden spike" at Promontory, Utah; and

13 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Labor awarded the
14 Chinese railroad workers a place on the department's Hall of
15 Honor in 2014 on the 145th Anniversary of the railroad's
16 completion; and

17 WHEREAS, Before the completion of the Transcontinental
18 Railroad, a journey across the United States took six months;
19 after the railroad's completion, it took one week; the cost of
20 such a trip was reduced from \$1,000 to \$150; and

1 WHEREAS, The impact of the Transcontinental Railroad in the
2 19th century has been likened to the impact of the internet in
3 the 21st century, transforming communications, commerce, and
4 industry and facilitating the movement of peoples across the
5 country, greatly increasing the global presence of the United
6 States; therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
8 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
9 schools and leaders across the State of Illinois are encouraged
10 to observe May 10, 2019 as the 150th anniversary of the
11 completion of the Transcontinental Railroad and celebrate the
12 tireless efforts of all of those who overcame brutal obstacles,
13 both natural and technological, to achieve the dream of uniting
14 the country from coast to coast; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That we declare May 10, 2019 as "Transcontinental
16 Railroad Day" in the State of Illinois; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
18 presented to the Illinois Department of Education and each
19 Illinois state university.