WHEREAS, Illinois has a long history of supporting nonpublic elementary and secondary schools; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, the General Assembly created the Invest in Kids Act to provide low-income students with scholarship monies to attend nonpublic schools due in large part to the strong academic prowess of nonpublic schools; and

WHEREAS, Nonpublic schools also have a long tradition of competing in elementary and high school athletics often as strong contenders for state championships in a variety of sports; and

WHEREAS, The Illinois School Code allows nonpublic schools to voluntarily register with the Illinois State Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, The Illinois School Code also allows nonpublic schools to seek recognition status through the Illinois State Board of Education; doing so shows parents and students that a particular nonpublic school meets the academic and safety standards of public schools in Illinois; and

WHEREAS, This voluntary registration and recognition
status has helped to keep nonpublic schools across Illinois as independent entities for several years; and

WHEREAS, During the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois State Board of Education have sought several times to supersede the tradition of nonpublic education in Illinois by placing several COVID-related mandates onto nonpublic schools; and

WHEREAS, As of September 10, 2021, the Illinois State Board of Education has removed the recognition status of 15 nonpublic schools for failing to abide by Governor Pritzker's mask mandate at schools; and

WHEREAS, The governing boards of nonpublic schools should have the right to make decisions in the best interest of their students and staff as they see fit; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we support nonpublic school autonomy and the voluntary process that allows nonpublic schools to seek registration and recognition with the Illinois State Board of Education; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we urge Governor JB Pritzker and the
Illinois State Board of Education to support nonpublic school autonomy when it comes to making decisions for their schools, including decisions related to COVID-19; and be it further RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be delivered to Governor JB Pritzker and State Superintendent Dr. Carmen Ayala.