



1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The Illinois House of Representatives is pleased  
3 to acknowledge the outstanding achievements of those  
4 individuals who strive to improve not only themselves, but the  
5 world around them; and

6 WHEREAS, Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah, from the African country of  
7 Ghana, is a man who has excelled both as an athlete and as a  
8 champion for the rights of the disabled; and

9 WHEREAS, Mr. Yeboah had many challenges to overcome in his  
10 early life; he was born without a tibia in his right leg, which  
11 left his leg useless and withered; and

12 WHEREAS, In Ghana, at the time, it was a commonly-held  
13 belief that a deformity of a child was caused by a sin of the  
14 mother; because of his son's deformed leg, Mr. Yeboah's father  
15 abandoned his family, and the friends of Mr. Yeboah's mother  
16 encouraged her to kill or, at the very least, abandon her  
17 disabled son; and

18 WHEREAS, Comfort Yeboah, Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah's mother,  
19 chose, instead, to nurture and encourage her firstborn son;  
20 Comfort Yeboah made the radical decision to send her disabled  
21 son to primary school instead of sending him to the streets as  
22 a beggar; and

23 WHEREAS, Comfort Yeboah died when her son was 13, and  
24 Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah was forced to drop out of school; he  
25 moved to Accra, the capital of Ghana, where he shined shoes for  
26 \$2 a day; and

27 WHEREAS, Seeking to prove that a disability is not an  
28 insurmountable challenge, in September of 2001, Mr. Yeboah,  
29 with the support of the Challenged Athletes Foundation,

1 embarked on a bicycle ride across his home country; with the  
2 use of only one leg and wearing a shirt that read "The Pozo",  
3 which is slang for a disabled person, Mr. Yeboah completed the  
4 379-mile ride across Ghana; and

5 WHEREAS, Mr. Yeboah's courageous efforts garnered media  
6 attention both in Ghana and around the world; Mr. Yeboah has  
7 used that media attention to champion the rights of the  
8 disabled; and

9 WHEREAS, In cooperation with King Osagyefuo Amotia Ofori  
10 Panin of Akyem Abuadwa and with the Free Wheelchair Mission,  
11 Mr. Yeboah has helped provide free wheelchairs to disabled  
12 persons around the world; since 2001, the Free Wheelchair  
13 Mission has distributed more than 24,000 wheelchairs in 37  
14 developing countries, including Afghanistan, Angola, Egypt,  
15 Ghana, Haiti, Iraq, Liberia, Rwanda, and Zambia; and

16 WHEREAS, In his home country, Mr. Yeboah has started a  
17 cycling team, a wheelchair basketball team, and a running team  
18 for physically challenged athletes, and he is currently working  
19 on starting a sports academy for disabled athletes; and

20 WHEREAS, The government of Ghana is taking steps to improve  
21 the quality of life for its disabled citizens; in September of  
22 2005, the government of Ghana indicated that, during its next  
23 session, the Parliament of Ghana would pass a Disability Bill  
24 to help remove barriers and obstacles that obscure the  
25 developmental efforts of people with disabilities; and

26 WHEREAS, The efforts of Emmanuel Ofori Yeboah, King  
27 Osagyefuo, the Parliament of Ghana, and countless others have  
28 gone a long way toward allowing persons with disabilities to  
29 live with purpose and dignity, but, as always, more can be  
30 done; therefore, be it

1           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
2           NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
3           we recognize and applaud the outstanding achievements of  
4           Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah both as an athlete and as a champion for  
5           the rights of the disabled; and be it further

6           RESOLVED, That we urge the Parliament of Ghana to increase  
7           its efforts to protect and improve the lives of its disabled  
8           citizens and to pass conscientious legislation to ensure the  
9           rights of the disabled; and be it further

10          RESOLVED, That we applaud King Osagyefuo Amotia Ofori Panin  
11          of Akyem Abuadwa for using his name and authority to improve  
12          the status of Ghana's many physically disabled persons; and be  
13          it further

14          RESOLVED, That we urge the citizens of Illinois to take  
15          part in the continuing efforts around the globe to make it  
16          possible for those with physical disabilities to live their  
17          lives with purpose, dignity, and value; and be it further

18          RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
19          delivered to Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah, King Osagyefuo Amotia Ofori  
20          Panin, and the Parliament of Ghana.