



1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 21

2 WHEREAS, Article I, Section 11 of the Illinois Constitution  
3 states "All penalties shall be determined both according to the  
4 seriousness of the offense AND WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF RESTORING  
5 THE OFFENDER TO USEFUL CITIZENSHIP" (emphasis added); and

6 WHEREAS, Illinois is one of only 11 states that has life  
7 without parole sentences and one of only 6 states where all  
8 life sentences are without parole; and

9 WHEREAS, Thirty years ago only a handful of prisoners in  
10 Illinois served sentences longer than 30 years; this year  
11 approximately 4,000 Illinois prisoners have sentences of 30  
12 years or more, including C number prisoners, amounting to about  
13 10% of all Illinois prisoners; and

14 WHEREAS, In Illinois at least 500 people each year are  
15 sentenced as lifers or long-term prisoners; and

16 WHEREAS, With the growth of truth in sentencing laws and  
17 increased use of life without parole sentences, the number of  
18 long-term prisoners will grow exponentially; and

19 WHEREAS, It costs at least one million dollars to confine a  
20 person in prison for 30 years; and

1           WHEREAS, It is estimated that close to half of those lifers  
2 and long-term prisoners will never be released from prison if  
3 current policies stay in place; and

4           WHEREAS, The recidivism rate for long-termers is the lowest  
5 of any group of prisoners; and

6           WHEREAS, A large number of lifers and long-term prisoners  
7 are sentenced under the accountability theory and not for the  
8 actual commission of the crime, and some are first time  
9 offenders; and

10          WHEREAS, Community crime prevention programs, not harsher  
11 prison sentences are responsible for the decline in crime  
12 rates; and

13          WHEREAS, Numerous innocent people have been wrongly  
14 convicted in Illinois; and

15          WHEREAS, Many countries no longer impose sentences of life  
16 without parole; therefore, be it

17          RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
18 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE  
19 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that there is created the Long-Term

1 Prisoners Study Committee, hereinafter referred to as the  
2 Committee, consisting of 17 members appointed as follows:

3 (1) Three members appointed by the President of the Senate;

4 (2) Two members appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
5 Senate;

6 (3) Three members appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
7 Representatives;

8 (4) Two members appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
9 House of Representatives;

10 (5) One member appointed by the Attorney General;

11 (6) One member appointed by the Governor;

12 (7) One member appointed by the Cook County State's  
13 Attorney;

14 (8) One member appointed by the Office of the Cook County  
15 Public Defender;

16 (9) One member appointed by the Office of the State  
17 Appellate Defender;

18 (10) One member appointed by the Office of the State's  
19 Attorneys Appellate Prosecutor; and

20 (11) One member appointed by the Director of Corrections;  
21 and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Department of Corrections shall provide  
23 staff and administrative support to the Committee; and be it  
24 further

1           RESOLVED, That the Committee shall study and examine issues  
2 related to prisoners sentenced to life without parole and  
3 prisoners sentenced to terms in excess of 30 years; and be it  
4 further

5           RESOLVED, That the Committee in its deliberations shall  
6 always give priority to public safety and the best use of State  
7 funds; and be it further

8           RESOLVED, That the Committee shall hold public hearings and  
9 present a report of its findings and recommendations to the  
10 95th General Assembly before December 31, 2007.