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LRB095 11875 NHT 37058 a

1 AMENDMENT TO SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 54

2 AMENDMENT NO. ____ . Amend Senate Joint Resolution 54 by
3 replacing everything after the heading with the following:

4 "WHEREAS, The provision of a free, appropriate public
5 education for a student with a visual impairment can occur only
6 with the proper concentrated services, equipment,
7 appropriately certified staff, and access to education; and

8 WHEREAS, Children and youth who are visually impaired face
9 unique and significant barriers related to their instruction
10 that profoundly affect most aspects of the educational process,
11 including the impact of ever changing technology and the world
12 it encompasses; and

13 WHEREAS, Blindness and visual impairments are often
14 considered secondary disabilities, thus the specialized
15 educational needs of the blind and visually impaired are rarely

1 fully addressed; and

2 WHEREAS, Children and youth with visual impairments are
3 guaranteed an education in the least restrictive setting,
4 determined on an individual basis, meaning that they are
5 entitled to be integrated as fully as possible into the regular
6 classroom, as appropriate; and

7 WHEREAS, Full access to education depends upon an
8 educational environment that utilizes the appropriate
9 materials and properly and fully trained staff and provides for
10 direct communication between staff, students, parents, and
11 peers; and

12 WHEREAS, The Illinois School for the Visually Impaired
13 should become the go-to facility for best teaching practices
14 regarding programs for children with visual impairments and the
15 statewide center for training, technical assistance, outreach,
16 and specialized curriculum development; and

17 WHEREAS, The Illinois School for the Visually Impaired
18 should include on-going training and technical assistance for
19 itinerant, mainstream, and private school educators; and

20 WHEREAS, The Illinois School for the Visually Impaired
21 should include specific programming on visual impairments for

1 teaching and rehabilitation professionals from both the State
2 Board of Education and the Department of Human Services; and

3 WHEREAS, While unemployment in the nation continues to
4 drop, the unemployment rate for people with visual impairments
5 is over 70%; and

6 WHEREAS, There should be greater access to transitional
7 services for students who are blind or visually impaired
8 entering vocational rehabilitation services and employment;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Successful transitional programs may result in
11 better services and jobs, knowledgeable self-advocates, and
12 achievement of competitive outcomes; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL
14 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
15 CONCURRING HEREIN, that there is created the Joint Task Force
16 on Blind and Visually Impaired Educational Options, consisting
17 of the following members, appointed as follows:

18 (1) the President of the Senate, the Minority Leader of
19 the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives,
20 and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives
21 shall each appoint one member;

22 (2) the Governor shall appoint a parent representative

1 from the Illinois School for the Visually Impaired and a
2 regional parent representative;

3 (3) the following entities shall each appoint one
4 member: the State Board of Education, the Department of
5 Human Services, the Illinois Association of Regional
6 Superintendents of Schools, the LightHouse for the Blind
7 and Visually Impaired, the Illinois School for the Visually
8 Impaired Alumni Association, the National Federation of
9 the Blind of Illinois, the Illinois Council of the Blind,
10 Early Intervention, the Illinois Association for Education
11 and Rehabilitation, the Illinois Vision Leadership
12 Council, the Phillip J. Rock Center or the Helen Keller
13 National Center, the Illinois Committee of Blind Vendors,
14 Illinois Parents of the Visually Impaired, the Blind
15 Services Planning Council, the Illinois School for the
16 Visually Impaired's Advisory Board, the Visual
17 Disabilities education program at Northern Illinois
18 University, and the Specialist in Low Vision and Blindness
19 education program at Illinois State University; and be it
20 further

21 RESOLVED, That all members of the Task Force shall serve
22 without compensation; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the duty of the Task Force is to undertake a
24 comprehensive and thorough review of the education of and

1 services available to the blind and visually impaired children
2 of this State with the intent of making recommendations that
3 would recognize the need for delivering full educational
4 services to a blind or visually impaired student, ensure that
5 schools have the most updated and adequate equipment to provide
6 services to blind and visually impaired students, and recognize
7 the need for teachers trained in the unique needs of blind and
8 visually impaired students; recommending research-based
9 methods and procedures to develop curricula for blind and
10 visually impaired students; and providing a comprehensive
11 review of the needs and operation of all educational entities
12 providing services to students who are blind or visually
13 impaired, including the Illinois School for the Visually
14 Impaired; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the Task Force should look towards states
16 that have successful, independent, and adequate educational
17 models for students with visual impairments, such as the
18 Washington State School for the Blind; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the Task Force may request assistance from
20 any entity necessary or useful for the performance of the Task
21 Force's duties; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall report its
23 recommendations to the General Assembly on or before December

1 31, 2008; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
3 delivered to the Governor, the State Board of Education, the
4 Department of Human Services, the Illinois Association of
5 Regional Superintendents of Schools, the LightHouse for the
6 Blind and Visually Impaired, the Illinois School for the
7 Visually Impaired Alumni Association, the National Federation
8 of the Blind of Illinois, the Illinois Council of the Blind,
9 Early Intervention, the Illinois Association for Education and
10 Rehabilitation, the Illinois Vision Leadership Council, the
11 Phillip J. Rock Center and the Helen Keller National Center,
12 the Illinois Committee of Blind Vendors, Illinois Parents of
13 the Visually Impaired, the Blind Services Planning Council, the
14 Illinois School for the Visually Impaired's Advisory Board, the
15 Visual Disabilities education program at Northern Illinois
16 University, and the Specialist in Low Vision and Blindness
17 education program at Illinois State University."