



HR1108

LRB097 21721 KXB 70155 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the Illinois House of
3 Representatives to acknowledge the significant achievements of
4 Illinois' most distinguished citizens; and

5 WHEREAS, Family Focus is a non-profit organization that
6 serves low-income families in the Chicago area, helping
7 families give their children the best possible start in life
8 and strengthening families by encouraging self-reliance,
9 advocacy, and community participation; and

10 WHEREAS, Bernice Weissbourd, a leading scholar, educator
11 and practitioner in child development, working with a small
12 group of colleagues in the 1970s, recognized that the first 3
13 years of life are critical to long-term success, and that
14 support for families is key to building a healthy and nurturing
15 environment for the developing child; and

16 WHEREAS, Bernice Weissbourd led the founding of Family
17 Focus in 1976 at Miller School in Evanston; and

18 WHEREAS, Family Focus works side-by-side with families and
19 communities based upon the Principles of Family Support, which
20 promote respect for families and their cultures, and today
21 provide child development education and skills training for

1 teen and adult parents, support for grandparents raising
2 grandchildren, counseling for young children and families
3 exposed to violence, developmental health screenings, early
4 intervention services, early literacy, home visiting,
5 after-school programming, health and fitness education for
6 parents and children, ESL and GED courses, citizenship and
7 computer literacy classes for adults, and help for families
8 that need to connect with community services and health care
9 providers; and

10 WHEREAS, Under Bernice Weissbourd's leadership and
11 guidance, Family Focus has grown to serve over 37,000 children
12 and parents each year at facilities in Cook, DuPage, Kane, and
13 Lake counties, with 8 community-based centers in Aurora,
14 Cicero, Bensenville, Evanston, and Highland Park, and the
15 Chicago neighborhoods of Englewood, Hermosa, and North
16 Lawndale; and

17 WHEREAS, Bernice Weissbourd is credited with focusing
18 national attention on the critical importance of a child's
19 first 3 years of life, and with leading the family support
20 movement, including through being a founder of the Family
21 Resource Coalition and Zero to Three; she is a member of the
22 President's Commission on Children; a columnist for Parent
23 magazine; an author of 2 highly regarded books, *America's*
24 *Family Support Programs: Perspectives and Prospects* and

1 *Putting Families First: America's Family Support Movement and*
2 *the Challenge of Change*, as well as many academic articles; and
3 a leader in numerous other national, State, and local
4 organizations; and

5 WHEREAS, Bernice Weissbourd is a life-long resident of
6 Chicago and graduate of the University of Chicago, where she
7 met her late husband, Bernard, who co-founded Family Focus and
8 who was a prominent civic and business leader; they became the
9 proud parents of Burt, Robert, Ruth (Grant), and Richard, and
10 grandparents of Ben, Emily, Jenny, Joe, Laura, Anna, Cora,
11 Brady, Jake, David, and Sophie; and

12 WHEREAS, Bernice Weissbourd's insights and accomplishments
13 with respect to families of young children flow from her
14 passions for justice and progress, and she has been similarly
15 active in civil rights, labor, and other progressive movements
16 throughout her life; and

17 WHEREAS, Bernice Weissbourd is renowned for being
18 nurturing, energetic, and good company; her home has always
19 been a gathering place for friends and neighbors; she is an
20 advisor and mentor to scores of people of all ages; and she was
21 a concert pianist, trained at The Juilliard School, with a
22 passion for music; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
2 NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
3 we, along with her friends, colleagues, and the countless
4 children and families she has helped, honor the marvelous
5 achievements and leadership of Family Focus founder Bernice
6 Weissbourd on the occasion of the 35th Anniversary Gala of
7 Family Focus on May 31, 2012; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
9 presented to Bernice Weissbourd and Family Focus as a symbol of
10 our utmost respect and great esteem.