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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, In 1974, Congress enacted the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act to support local and state efforts to prevent delinquency and improve the juvenile justice system and how it handles the cases of children and their families; and

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WHEREAS, Youth of color are disproportionately represented at all stages of the juvenile justice system and rates of overrepresentation increase as children proceed through the system; and

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WHEREAS, The Cook County Juvenile Court in Markham is one of the nation's busiest court houses, busier than Chicago or Los Angeles; and

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WHEREAS, The demographics of youth of color from various regions reflect the major antecedents of high crime and "troubled communities", high unemployment, struggling educational system, high young population, and high rates of families that have a single head of household; and

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WHEREAS, It is estimated that rates of post-traumatic stress disorder in juvenile justice-involved youth is comparable to rates of soldiers returning from Iraq, between 3%

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1 and 50%; and

2 WHEREAS, Studies show that between 25% and 45% of prisoners
3 in the United States have attention deficit hyperactivity
4 disorder; recidivism rates are also high, with an estimated
5 two-thirds being rearrested within about 3 years; and

6 WHEREAS, The creation of a Regional Juvenile Justice
7 Council would build and expand on the work of the Cook County
8 Juvenile Advisory Council (comprised of probation staff and
9 "wards of the state" who work together) to facilitate
10 community-based collaboration and perspective on oversight,
11 research and evaluation of activities, and programs and
12 policies directed towards and impacting the lives of juveniles;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, A Regional Juvenile Justice Council would be
15 comprised of representatives from Illinois Criminal Justice
16 Information Authority Councils, Cook County Department of
17 Public Health Domestic Violence Councils, local school
18 districts, universities, and various stakeholders active in
19 the region, including business persons, representatives from
20 law enforcement, juvenile justice-involved family
21 representatives, mental health professionals, social service
22 agencies, representatives of the clergy, local leaders,
23 elected officials, and representatives from Cook County

1 Juvenile Advisory Councils; and

2 WHEREAS, A Regional Juvenile Justice Council would
3 incorporate the broader community with a focus on prevention,
4 youth resilience, and community safety as they work together to
5 provide a community perspective to influence local, regional,
6 and State policies that effect juvenile justice and the youth
7 in their communities; and

8 WHEREAS, The Office of Juvenile Justice seeks to reduce
9 "disproportionate minority contact" by reducing over
10 representation of youth of color in the justice system,
11 reducing racial and ethnic disparities at each decision making
12 point, and preventing youth of color from disproportionately
13 entering and moving deeper into the juvenile justice system
14 than other youth; and

15 WHEREAS, A Regional Juvenile Justice Council would seek to
16 research the relationship between attention deficit
17 hyperactivity disorder, childhood trauma, and juvenile
18 delinquency, decrease disproportionate minority school
19 arrests, increase school retention and academic performance,
20 decrease curfew violations, decrease recurring arrests,
21 increase positive group activities for justice involved youth,
22 increase positive role models for justice involved youth, and
23 increase positive messages that discourage violence and

1 delinquency; and

2 WHEREAS, Faith and community-based organizations provide
3 critical leadership, knowledge, and passion when it comes to
4 preventing and intervening in cycles of youth violence and
5 delinquency around the country; and

6 WHEREAS, Throughout the nation, faith and non-profit
7 organizations have taken on many tasks in order to keep young
8 people safe and increase positive opportunities for young
9 people; and

10 WHEREAS, Staff and volunteers from faith and
11 community-based organizations mentor juveniles, counsel
12 parents, teach classes, serve meals, sponsor after-school
13 programs, conduct home visits, and work with law enforcement
14 agencies to address and reduce the problems related to juvenile
15 delinquency; and

16 WHEREAS, A Regional Juvenile Justice Council would be
17 committed to enhancing the quality of life for all youth by
18 actively advising the Governor, policymakers, and the public on
19 matters related to improving system of care, enhancing
20 interagency community collaboration, and promoting effective
21 programming necessary to serving the needs of the whole child;
22 therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL
2 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we encourage faith and
3 community-based organizations to collaborate with law
4 enforcement, juvenile justice, mental health professionals,
5 educators, and businesses to develop and implement a Regional
6 Juvenile Justice Advisory Council that researches and develops
7 policies and interventions to address juvenile justice
8 disparities and disproportionate minority contact through a
9 collaborative process that takes full advantage of State and
10 federal funding resources; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
12 delivered to juvenile justice-involved agencies and
13 organizations through the State of Illinois.