



SR1257

LRB098 21613 GRL 60407 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Feeding Illinois, the State association of 8 food banks serving all 102 counties, has found that more than 1.8 million of our 12.9 million citizens are "food insecure", meaning that 14.2% of our families, neighbors, and colleagues lack adequate access to the sustenance needed for a healthy and productive life; and

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WHEREAS, Washington Post reporter Eli Saslow won a 2014 Pulitzer Prize for a series of articles about food insecurity which he described as "a lasting scar" of the 2008 economic collapse; and

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WHEREAS, The number of Illinois citizens participating in the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly the Food Stamp Program) has increased 40.7% between January of 2009 and January of 2014; and

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WHEREAS, The federal government responded to changing public interest by modifying SNAP to enable program recipients to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers markets and farm stands; and

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WHEREAS, SNAP is one of 16 federal feeding programs spending approximately \$4 billion a year in Illinois; and

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1           WHEREAS, On May 5, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson's  
2 aide, Sargent Shriver, proposed that the "War on Poverty"  
3 incorporate a grassroots component based on this observation:  
4 "Wherever local communities have started programs to help the  
5 poor help themselves, the response has exceeded all  
6 expectations"; and

7           WHEREAS, The Illinois Commission on the Eradication of  
8 Poverty, created by statute in 2008, produced a strategic plan  
9 that affirms Sargent Shriver's proposal by asserting: "...the  
10 best solutions for poverty (oftentimes) come from local  
11 innovation"; and

12           WHEREAS, Illinois schools provide subsidized meals for one  
13 of every 5 Illinois children because they come from families  
14 that exceed federal poverty guidelines; and

15           WHEREAS, Local food, nutrition, and agriculture plans at  
16 the municipal and rural township level could provide structure  
17 to support projects designed to help end hunger and poverty in  
18 urban, suburban, exurban, and rural communities throughout  
19 Illinois; and

20           WHEREAS, At least 6 Governors' councils and commissions  
21 possess unique expertise and functions that, if aligned through

1 a collaborative process, could result in the improved delivery  
2 of public and private resources for the benefit of  
3 community-based initiatives to help end hunger and reduce  
4 poverty in Illinois; and

5 WHEREAS, The Illinois Commission to End Hunger, created by  
6 statute in 2010, is exploring how to encourage partnerships  
7 between the State's 2,000-plus food pantries and its 375-plus  
8 farmers' markets; and

9 WHEREAS, The Greater Chicago Food Depository is partnering  
10 with Heartland Alliance on an urban agriculture pilot project,  
11 Chicago FarmWorks, to create transitional jobs for  
12 hard-to-employ people on a 2.6-acre vegetable farm in the West  
13 Side Chicago community of East Garfield Park; and

14 WHEREAS, The Illinois Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Council,  
15 created by statute in 2009, is working to facilitate action  
16 supporting the growth of local food and farm economies from  
17 Chicago to Cairo; and

18 WHEREAS, The Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and  
19 Community Service, created by statute, is discovering that  
20 community-based local food projects could be a pathway to build  
21 a statewide "volunteer infrastructure"; and

1           WHEREAS, The Illinois Task Force on Social Innovation,  
2 Entrepreneurship, and Enterprise, created by Executive Order  
3 11-05, has a set of charges that include the attraction of  
4 funds "to accelerate progress on social issues, work  
5 cross-sector, and advance social and economic development  
6 goals"; and

7           WHEREAS, The Illinois Business Development Council,  
8 created by statute in 2013, will enact an annual State business  
9 plan based on input from such sources as "State and local  
10 business development and marketing efforts focusing on areas of  
11 high unemployment or poverty"; and

12           WHEREAS, Collaboration between these 6 State entities  
13 could accelerate development of community-based food,  
14 nutrition, and agricultural initiatives that contribute to  
15 broader efforts to end hunger and reduce poverty in Illinois;  
16 therefore, be it

17           RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL  
18 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we urge the Governor to  
19 design and execute a strategy to align the unique expertise and  
20 functions of the Illinois Commission to End Hunger, the  
21 Illinois Commission on the Eradication of Poverty, the Illinois  
22 Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Council, the Illinois Commission on  
23 Volunteerism and Community Service, the Illinois Task Force of

1 Social Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Enterprise, and the  
2 Illinois Business Development Council in an ongoing program to  
3 embolden and empower communities to advance low-cost and  
4 high-return strategies to help end hunger and poverty; and be  
5 it further

6 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
7 delivered to the Governor.