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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Direct support professionals provide long-term support and services for thousands of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, Direct support professionals build close, respectful, and trusted relationships with the persons they help support and their families; and

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WHEREAS, Direct support professionals provide a broad range of individualized support and assistance with tasks such as eating, bathing, administering medication, job and life skills training, money management, meal preparation, and reading, community engagement, and transportation; and

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WHEREAS, Over the past several decades, thousands of individuals with developmental disabilities have moved from their family homes, foster homes or state institutions into group homes, where they have been able to achieve more productive and fulfilling lives; and

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WHEREAS, There is a documented critical and growing shortage of direct support professionals in Illinois that is directly correlated to low wages that are often below the federal poverty level; and

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1 WHEREAS, This staffing crisis gravely impacts the quality
2 of life and personal safety of persons with disabilities in
3 Illinois; and

4 WHEREAS, In order to continue to enhance the lives of
5 persons with disabilities and their families who rely on long
6 term supports and services, community providers who employ
7 direct support professionals must obtain the resources to
8 recruit, train and retain a highly qualified and sustainable
9 workforce; and

10 WHEREAS, Competition is growing for direct support
11 professionals; job opportunities at Walmart, fast food
12 restaurants, retail stores, the new Amazon warehouse, and even
13 at the local donut shop often pay more than what the State pays
14 direct service professionals; in addition, the minimum wage in
15 Chicago is rising well above what the State currently pays
16 direct service professionals; and

17 WHEREAS, The "They Deserve More" coalition is engaged in a
18 statewide effort to address the staffing crisis affecting
19 services to people with disabilities and their families in
20 Illinois; and

21 WHEREAS, The only solution to this ever-worsening crisis is

1 to increase state funding to provide a living and competitive
2 wage for direct support professionals; and

3 WHEREAS, Illinoisans recognize and celebrate the
4 contributions of direct support professionals that help
5 strengthen our communities by fostering greater inclusion for
6 persons with disabilities; therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
8 HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
9 declare September 11-15, 2017 as "Direct Support Professionals
10 Recognition Week" in the State of Illinois; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That we honor the dedication and vital role of
12 direct support professionals in enhancing the lives of children
13 and adults with disabilities and their families.