HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

RESOLUTION

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO.4699, by Representatives Lovick, Pettigrew and D. Simpson

WHEREAS, The strength of America is embodied in its guarantee of life, liberty, equality, justice, and the right to pursue happiness for all its people; a guarantee that is predicated, in part, upon universal education for all children, the right to vote, and the right to fully participate in the civic life of the American community; and

WHEREAS, During the early years of America's history, under state and local laws in parts of the country, African-American children were enslaved and denied the right to any education, and when those laws were overturned at the end of the civil war, African-American and Caucasian children, through local segregation laws, were denied the right to learn together in the same schools and colleges; and

WHEREAS, 2004 is the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, a landmark decision in which the Supreme Court unanimously declared that separate was inherently unequal, segregation was illegal, and all American children, regardless of the colors of their skins, had the right to study and learn together in the same schools and colleges; and

WHEREAS, *Brown v. Board of Education* began to break down the legal structures that denied African-Americans the right to fully participate in the country's educational system, and paved the way for the African-Americans and other Americans to work together to fulfill the dream so eloquently articulated by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., that all people would be judged on the content of their characters instead of the color of their skins; and

WHEREAS, *Brown v. Board of Education* was the first legal victory in almost one hundred years for a civic structure that was based on "One America," a victory that helped inspire African-Americans and other Americans to work together for equality in other aspects of American life, leading to freedom marches, the Civil Rights Law of 1965, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and

WHEREAS, While African-Americans and other Americans have made honorable attempts to provide educational equality for all children, an achievement gap in education and higher education is delaying the fulfillment of the dream of "One America" for many children, including children from African-American, Hispanic-American, and American Indian heritages, children from low-income backgrounds, children with disabilities, and immigrant children for whom English is not their families' first language; and

WHEREAS, The achievement gap, which includes lower academic achievement levels, higher school and college dropout rates, lower school and college graduation rates, lower levels of college and graduate school admissions for children from different ethnic, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds, impedes the abilities of these children to fully participate in the economic and civic lives of their communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives, on behalf of the people of our state, remember with regret the years when the promises of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution did not apply equally to all Americans and celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education* when the Supreme Court declared that the guarantees of equality in our foundational documents applied equally to all of America's children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That as a state and nation, we continue to work together to fulfil the dream of "One America," a land in which all children have equal opportunities to become well educated, to pursue their lives unimpeded by discrimination, and to be judged by the content of their characters instead of the socio-economic circumstances of their families, or the lands of their birth, or the color of their skins; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives to the Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the members of the superintendent's multi-ethnic think tank, and the Commission on African-American Affairs.

I hereby certify this to be a true and correct copy of
Resolution 4699 adopted by the House of Representatives
February 20, 2004

Richard Nafziger, Chief Clerk