

A CALL TO PRAYER FOR ILLINOIS

THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES, ITS CITIZENS HAVE DRAWN STRENGTH, HOPE, AND GUIDANCE BY PRAYER AND HUMBLE PETITION BEFORE A LOVING AND MERCIFUL CREATOR—IMPLORING HIM TO WATCH OVER THIS NATION, ITS LEADERS, AND HER PEOPLE. THROUGH THIS SIMPLE TRUST IN GOD, THE PEOPLE OF ILLINOIS HAVE ENDEAVORED TO SHOW THEIR COMMITMENT WHEN DUTY CALLS, TO OFFER DIGNITY AND COMPASSION TO THOSE LESS FORTUNATE AND TO BRING REASSURANCE IN THE FACE OF UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES.

THE FAITH-BASED PRINCIPLES THAT ESTABLISHED AMERICA, INCLUDING THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, GUARANTEE THE FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND ITS EXPRESSION. ON MAY 24, 1774, CAUCUS MEMBERS FROM THE VIRGINIA HOUSE OF BURGESSES PASSED A RESOLUTION SETTING APART A DAY OF "FASTING, HUMILIATION, AND PRAYER." IN EARLY 2005, A SMALL GROUP FROM THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BEGAN MEETING IN ROOM 219 OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL TO PRAY FOR OUR NATION. THE GRAVITY OF THIS MEETING WAS DERIVED FROM A SINCERE BELIEF THAT GOD COULD HEAL AND RESTORE AMERICA. SOON THEREAFTER, THESE MEMBERS FORMED THE CONGRESSIONAL PRAYER CAUCUS TO VIGILANTLY WATCH OVER AND PROTECT THE RIGHT OF INDIVIDUALS TO PRAY, INCLUDING THE RECENT CONGRESSIONAL RE-AFFIRMATION OF "IN GOD WE TRUST" AS OUR NATIONAL MOTTO.

WE STAND AT THE THRESHOLD OF ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT CROSSROAD: EITHER TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND EMBRACE THE VIBRANT CHARACTER OF OUR SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OR TO PLUNGE HEADLONG INTO THE POSTMODERN VOID—A VALUE-NEUTRAL AND AMORAL VACUUM THAT ATTEMPTS TO DECONSTRUCT MUCH OF WHAT WE HOLD SACRED.

CENTURIES AGO, THE BIBLE RECORDS IN 2 CHRONICLES 7:14 GOD'S MESSAGE TO KING SOLOMON:

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

FROM THE FOUNDING DAYS AS THE TWENTY-FIRST STATE TO ENTER THE UNION IN 1818, ILLINOIS HAS BECOME KNOWN FOR ITS PRODUCTIVITY AS THE PRAIRIE STATE, ITS DIVERSE CULTURE, AND ITS STRONG FAMILY TRADITIONS. OUR MOTTO, "STATE SOVEREIGNTY, NATIONAL UNION," SPEAKS OF LEGACY AS THE LAND OF LINCOLN, WHO CONFIDENTLY PROCLAIMED, "THIS NATION, UNDER GOD, SHALL HAVE A NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM AND THAT GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, AND FOR THE PEOPLE, SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE EARTH."

NOW, IN CONSIDERING THE PREAMBLE OF THE STATE CONSTITUTION AND ITS DECLARATION THAT, "WE, THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS — [ARE] GRATEFUL TO ALMIGHTY GOD FOR THE CIVIL, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY WHICH HE HAS PERMITTED US TO ENJOY AND [SEEK] HIS BLESSING UPON OUR ENDEAVORS," WE ARE ALSO CHALLENGED BY THE WORDS OF OUR STATE SONG, "LET US PLEDGE IN FINAL CHORUS, THAT IN STRUGGLES STILL BEFORE US, TO OUR HEROES WE'LL BE TRUE, AS THEIR VISION WE PURSUE."

WITH SUCH ASSURANCE, WE FURTHER RECOGNIZE THE HONORABLE AND SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY OF THOSE ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE OFTEN DRAWS MANY SERVANTS WHO BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF PRAYER—TO PURSUE HUMILITY IN GOVERNANCE, WISDOM IN DECISION MAKING, COURAGE IN TIMES OF TESTING, AND PROVIDENCE FOR GOD'S FAVOR AND BLESSING.

THEREFORE AND IN SUPPORT OF THE VALUES HEREIN STATED, WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, WHO BELIEVE IN PRAYER AND THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES THAT REMIND US OUR RIGHTS COME FROM ALMIGHTY GOD, UNITE IN THIS PROCLAMATION WITH A RESOLUTE HEART. ACCORDINGLY, THIS DAY, WE RESPECTFULLY AND HUMBLY ISSUE A "CALL TO PRAYER" FOR THE STATE OF ILLINOIS AND INVITE ITS CITIZENS EVERYWHERE TO PRAY THAT GOD WILL CONTINUE TO BLESS THIS COUNTRY, OUR NOBLE STATE AND THE FREEDOM FOR WHICH THEY STAND. ★

WITNESS THE FOLLOWING SIGNATURES AS OF THE 5TH DAY OF FEBRUARY IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, 2015.

Sam M. Cannon
Robert Gagliardi
Rich McEnt
Jim Overman
Michael Cally
Chris Nyte
Tom Mowse
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Heather Ward