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**Illinois Senate Passes Resolution to Close College Racial, Economic
Achievement Gaps and Increase Graduation Rates**

*Partnership for College Completion-sponsored resolution highlights urgency to prepare
all students for demands of Illinois workforce*

June 15, 2018, Chicago, IL—For the first time in Illinois’ history, a chamber of the General Assembly has committed to closing the state’s large racial and socioeconomic college degree attainment and institutional achievement gaps. In passing Senate Resolution 1647 ([SR1647](#)), sponsored by the [Partnership for College Completion](#), the Senate is urging that the state add equity measures to the public goal of increasing the percentage of Illinoisans with a college degree or credential to 60 percent by 2025. Legislators pledged to support college and university programs that show evidence of improving educational outcomes for low-income and first generation college students and students of color.

The resolution comes amidst [analysis](#) from the Partnership highlighting persistent gaps in achievement and underscoring the moral and economic imperative to take action through awareness, programs, and policy. According to Illinois’ 60 by 25 Network, 80 percent of employers say they need workers with some postsecondary education. But, only 33.7 percent of African American students who start at four-year institutions earn bachelor’s degrees within six years – a rate 32.7 percentage points below that of their White peers. For Latinos, 49.3 percent are earning degrees, a still-wide gap of 17.1 percentage points. The completion gap between low-income and wealthier students is also alarming: according to Advance, Illinois, only 37 percent of low-income students graduate in six years while 75 percent of wealthier students do.

“We applaud the action taken by the Senate to recognize the importance of the racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps and the urgent steps colleges and universities must take to prepare all students to graduate with the skills to meet the changing needs of the workforce,” said Kyle Westbrook, executive director of the Partnership.

**PARTNERSHIP FOR
COLLEGE COMPLETION**
Accelerating action to close the graduation gap

The Partnership promotes policies, systems and practices that ensure all Illinois' students, particularly low-income and first generation students, graduate from college and achieve their career aspirations. The Partnership's initial focus is on colleges and universities in the seven-county northeastern Illinois area. The recently-passed Senate resolution follows a Partnership initiative with the presidents of 10 colleges and universities, who announced a series of interventions that they will be implementing or expanding in the Fall of 2018 to increase Latino college students' graduation rates.

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About: The Partnership for College Completion is a new nonprofit organization launched to catalyze and champion policies, systems and practices that ensure all students in and around Chicago - particularly low-income, first generation students - graduate from college and achieve their career aspirations. Launching this regional organization is the culmination of a two-year planning process that was led by Forefront's College and Career Access, Persistence and Success (CCAPS) group and involved hundreds of stakeholders from across Chicago, the region and the nation. For more information: partnershipfcc.org