



30 opportunity that benefits families striving to escape poverty;

31 WHEREAS, Utah's uniquely successful approach of integrated workforce and welfare  
32 programs has proven effective and prompted other states to petition Congress for the flexibility  
33 to replicate Utah's model;

34 WHEREAS, the state of Utah has made concerted and significant efforts to identify and  
35 address instances of chronic or intergenerational poverty that still occur among its citizens;

36 WHEREAS, Utah's culture of continuous improvement has positioned it as a national  
37 leader in workforce and welfare policies that strengthen upward mobility for impoverished  
38 families;

39 WHEREAS, new independent research from Sutherland Institute identifies evidence of  
40 families receiving public assistance feeling disincentivized from pursuing or accepting  
41 opportunities to increase their earned income and improve their financial situation;

42 WHEREAS, this research finds that 77% of respondents to a statewide survey of public  
43 assistance recipients report concern that earning additional income would result in a loss of  
44 benefits that would worsen their family's financial situation;

45 WHEREAS, this research further finds that 62% of respondents report feeling stuck in a  
46 low-income job due to the belief that increased income would cause loss of benefits that would  
47 not be worth the additional income;

48 WHEREAS, this research further finds that 43% of respondents report having intentionally  
49 limited their earned income due to fear of triggering a "benefits cliff" or "benefits plateau";

50 WHEREAS, the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta defines this phenomenon as a wage  
51 increase that "may result in a family being financially worse off (a benefits cliff) or no better  
52 off (a benefits plateau) than before the wage increase";

53 WHEREAS, for families who strive to improve their economic conditions, benefits cliffs,  
54 benefits plateaus, and other disincentive effects have the potential to trap families in poverty  
55 by hindering workforce participation and disincentivizing financial stability;

56 WHEREAS, some families participating in multiple social safety net programs may face  
57 confusion about differing eligibility rules and phaseouts, making financial planning more  
58 challenging;

59 WHEREAS, the state of Utah is committed to finding innovative solutions to any  
60 disincentive effects to work, family formation, economic independence, or other opportunities  
61 that may be present in the social safety net; and

62 WHEREAS, due to federal restrictions, states have limited authority to experiment with  
63 federally funded social safety net programs for the purpose of finding innovative reforms that

64 can address benefits cliffs, benefits plateaus, perception gaps, or other obstacles to upward  
65 mobility experienced by families receiving public assistance:

66 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the  
67 Governor concurring therein, urges the President of the United States, and Congress, to grant  
68 additional flexibility and autonomy to states to experiment with innovative pilot programs and  
69 other reforms to improve social safety net programs by addressing any existing work  
70 disincentives in a way that protects budget neutrality, ensures fiscal responsibility, and seeks  
71 better outcomes.

72 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor urge the President  
73 and Congress to expedite waiver approvals for states pursuing innovative pilot programs or  
74 other reforms to the social safety net.

75 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor urge the President  
76 and Congress to pursue additional flexibility to the states in the form of block grants for a  
77 wider array of existing social safety net programs.

78 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor urge the President  
79 and Congress to streamline and consolidate reporting requirements from the states to the  
80 federal government to save taxpayer dollars and yield efficiencies.

81 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor call upon the  
82 President and Congress to embrace the principles of federalism to further empower states to be  
83 the laboratories of democracy and drive innovative reforms and improvements to our nation's  
84 social safety net.

85 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the clerk of the Utah House of Representatives shall  
86 distribute copies of this resolution to Utah's congressional delegation.