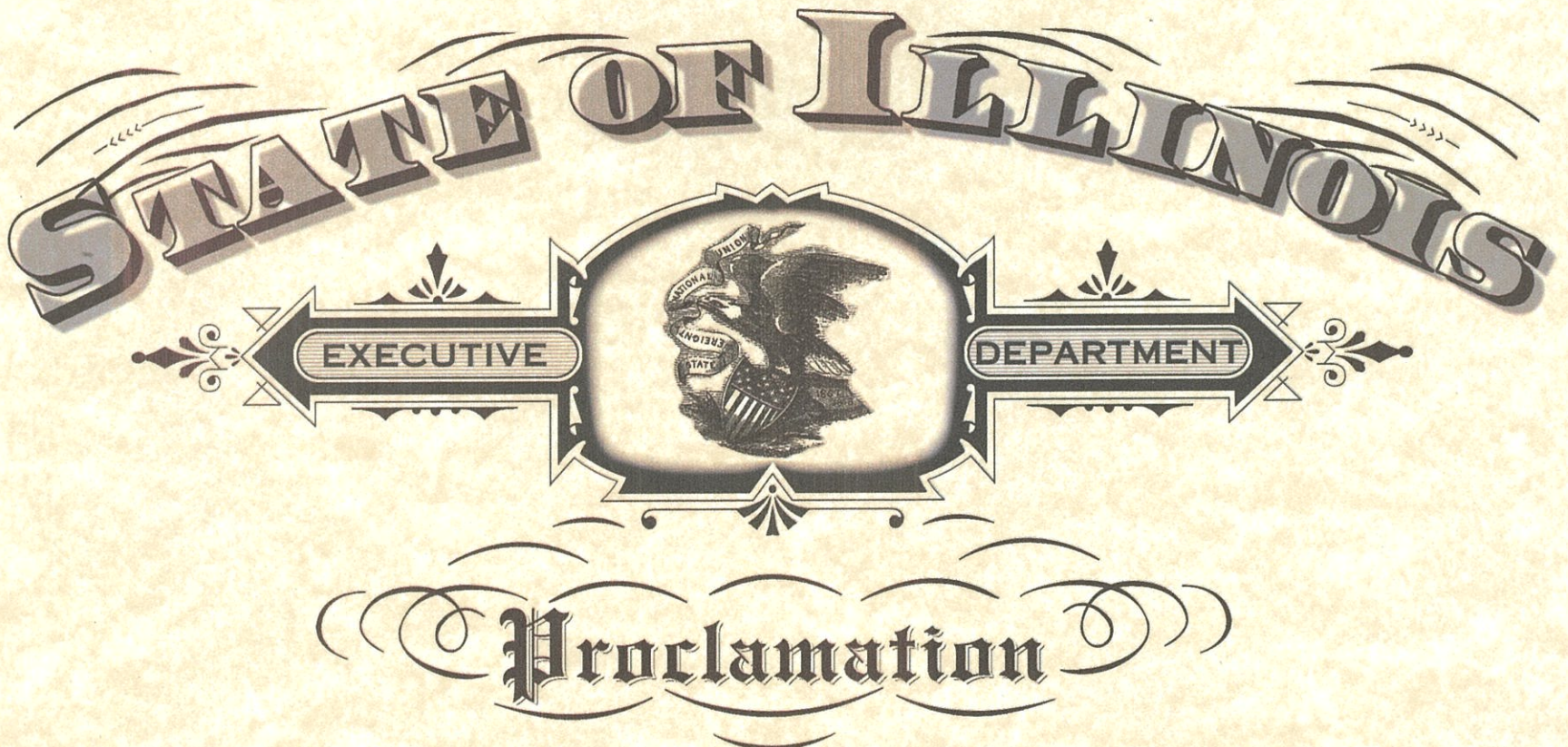




WHEREAS, education matters for students and for the social and economic health of our state by creating opportunity, strengthening families, fueling local economies, and building and nurturing thriving, resilient communities; and,

WHEREAS, helping students and families make informed decisions about education after high school is central to the mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), who provides direct student support statewide (including through the Illinois Student Assistance Corps, or ISACorps) that connects students to financial assistance to help make their choices a reality; and,

WHEREAS, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) allows students to apply for need-based grants, work-study, and subsidized loans that can be used for traditional college programs or for preparation for a trade, and the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid allows access to state-funded, need-based assistance for students unable to receive federal aid; and,

WHEREAS, a key component of the Education Matters effort is the Education Matters Outreach Campaign, supporting students and families statewide during the financial aid and college application season, with schools and community organizations hosting an intensive schedule of college application and financial aid workshops between Labor Day and Thanksgiving; and,

WHEREAS, these coordinated efforts helped Illinois to achieve its highest-ever FAFSA completion rate for the Class of 2026, the second-highest in the country, and the highest rate in the Midwest, and the graduating Class of 2027 stands to benefit from the same level of support as they chart their own paths forward;

THEREFORE, I, JB Pritzker, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby declare October 2026 to be **Education Matters Month** in Illinois and encourage students and families to take advantage of the resources available to them throughout the Education Matters Campaign and commend participating organizations for supporting Illinois students and our state's bright, dynamic future.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.



Done at the Capitol in the City of Springfield,
this FIRST day of OCTOBER, in
the Year of Our Lord, two thousand and
TWENTY-SIX, and of the State of Illinois,
SEVENTH
two hundred and _____.

Alexi Giannoulis
SECRETARY OF STATE

JB Pritzker
GOVERNOR