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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives wish to congratulate the owners and employees
4 of the WVON radio station in Chicago on the occasion of the
5 station's 50th anniversary in 2013; and

6 WHEREAS, WVON originated from the acquisition of
7 WHFC-1450AM, a 1,000-watt station licensed in Cicero, by
8 Leonard and Phil Chess, the owners of Chess Records, a
9 successful record label, which produced mega-hits for local
10 artists such as Muddy Waters, Lil' Howlin' Wolf, and others;
11 the brothers envisioned one station that would pull together
12 the best radio talent who could galvanize all of black Chicago;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, On April 1, 1963, WVON hit the airwaves in Chicago
15 with a group of handpicked personalities, Franklin McCarthy, E.
16 Rodney Jones, Herb Kent, Wesley South, and Pervis Spann, who
17 eventually became known as "The Good Guys"; Ric Ricardo, Bill
18 "Butterball" Crane, Ed Cook, Joe Cobb, Roy Wood, Ed Maloney,
19 Bill "Doc" Lee, Don Cornelius, Richard Pegue, Isabel Joseph
20 Johnson, Cecil Hale, and McKee Fitzhugh eventually joined the
21 roster; under the direction of the station's general manager,
22 Lucky Cordell, and its "Ambassador of Good Will", Bernadine C.
23 Washington, the Good Guys held black Chicago captive for more

1 than a decade and ranked consistently in the top 5 of the "most
2 listened to" stations in the market; and

3 WHEREAS, The power of WVON soon went beyond the Chicago
4 market; Berry Gordy, the founder of Motown Records, had a
5 special arrangement with WVON that every song he produced would
6 be sent immediately to WVON before any other station; WVON also
7 served as the voice of information for local and national
8 affairs; during the riots that followed the death of Dr. Martin
9 Luther King, Jr., WVON on-air personalities were there to lift
10 the spirits and ease the tension that had erupted in
11 neighborhoods across the city; and

12 WHEREAS, Following the death of Leonard Chess in 1969, the
13 Chess family decided to sell WVON to George Gillette and Potter
14 Palmer, who formed Globetrotter Communications; in 1977,
15 Globetrotter Communications sold WVON to the Gannett Company;
16 in 1986, at the height of the black community's political
17 involvement in Chicago, Wesley South, co-owner of WVON, opted
18 to change the station's format to talk, providing Chicago with
19 its first black-talk radio format; and

20 WHEREAS, WVON will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a
21 two-day celebration on April 5-7, which will include the
22 station's "IMPACT 50" Grand Gala; and

1 WHEREAS, For 40 years, WVON has been and remains the drum
2 major for the African-American community of Chicago and
3 continues its mission of providing a platform on which black
4 Chicago can air its concerns, voice its differences, and
5 discuss the issues that affect society; therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
7 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
8 we congratulate the owners and employees of the WVON radio
9 station on the occasion of the station's 50th anniversary and
10 wish them continued success and happiness in the future; and be
11 it further

12 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
13 presented to WVON as a symbol of our esteem and respect.