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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, A. Philip Randolph was born Asa Philip Randolph on
3 April 15, 1889 in Crescent City, Florida; he was the second son
4 of James Randolph, a Methodist minister, and his wife,
5 Elizabeth, both of whom were staunch supporters of equal rights
6 for African Americans and general human rights; in 1891, the
7 Randolph family moved to Jacksonville, Florida, where A. Philip
8 would live for most of his youth; he attended the Cookman
9 Institute, one of the first institutions of higher education
10 for blacks in the country; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1911, after graduating from Cookman, A. Philip
12 Randolph moved to the Harlem neighborhood of New York City;
13 during this time, he studied English literature and sociology
14 at City College; he held a variety of jobs, including as an
15 elevator operator, a porter, and a waiter, and developed his
16 rhetorical skills; in 1912, he founded an employment agency
17 called the Brotherhood of Labor as a way to organize black
18 workers; his efforts began when he was working as a waiter on a
19 coastal steamship, and he organized a rally against their poor
20 living conditions; and

21 WHEREAS, In 1913, A. Philip Randolph married Howard
22 University graduate and beauty shop entrepreneur Lucille
23 Green; shortly thereafter, he organized a drama society in

1 Harlem known as Ye Friends of Shakespeare and played several
2 roles in subsequent productions; in 1917, he co-founded a
3 political magazine, The Messenger, and began publishing
4 articles calling for the inclusion of more blacks in the Armed
5 Forces and war industry and demanding higher wages; he also
6 tried to unionize African American shipyard workers in Virginia
7 and elevator operators in New York City; and

8 WHEREAS, After World War I ended, A. Philip Randolph became
9 a lecturer at the Rand School of Social Science; in the early
10 1920s, he unsuccessfully ran for office in New York State and
11 became more convinced than ever that unions would be the best
12 way for African Americans to improve their situation; and

13 WHEREAS, In 1925, A. Philip Randolph founded the
14 Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) and served as its
15 president; he sought to gain the union's official inclusion in
16 the American Federation of Labor, the affiliates of which, at
17 that time, frequently barred African Americans from
18 membership; the BSCP met with resistance primarily from the
19 Pullman Company, which was the largest employer of blacks at
20 that time; A. Philip persisted and won membership in the AFL in
21 1937, making the BSCP the first African American union in the
22 United States; and

23 WHEREAS, During the 1940s, A. Philip Randolph twice used

1 mass protests as a means of influencing the policies of the
2 federal government; he planned a march on Washington to protest
3 discrimination in the war industry workforce but called off the
4 march after President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive
5 order that banned racial discrimination at government defense
6 factories and established the first Fair Employment Practices
7 Committee; he also organized the League for Nonviolent Civil
8 Disobedience Against Military Segregation, which eventually
9 led President Harry S. Truman to issue a 1948 executive order
10 banning racial segregation in the U.S. Armed Forces; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1955, A. Philip Randolph became a vice
12 president of the newly merged entity AFL-CIO (Congress of
13 Industrial Organizations); he continued to protest the
14 systemic racial prejudice he found in the organization; in
15 1957, he organized a prayer pilgrimage to Washington, D.C. to
16 draw attention to the delay of school desegregation being
17 implemented in the South; he also organized the Youth Marches
18 for Integrated Schools and formed the Negro American Labor
19 Council in 1959; and

20 WHEREAS, In 1963, A. Philip Randolph was a principal
21 organizer of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom,
22 during which he spoke to an integrated crowd of nearly 250,000
23 supporters; he shared the podium with Martin Luther King Jr.,
24 who delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech; A. Philip and

1 Dr. King were among the handful of civil rights leaders to meet
2 with President John F. Kennedy after the march; and

3 WHEREAS, The following year, A. Philip Randolph was
4 presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President
5 Lyndon B. Johnson; soon after, he co-founded the A. Philip
6 Randolph Institute, an organization aimed at studying the
7 causes of poverty; in 1965, at a White House conference, he
8 proposed a poverty-elimination program called the Freedom
9 Budget for All Americans; and

10 WHEREAS, A. Philip Randolph resigned from his more than
11 40-year tenure as president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car
12 Porters in 1968; he also retired from public life and spent the
13 next few years writing his autobiography; he died in bed at his
14 New York City home on May 16, 1979 at age 90; he was cremated,
15 and his ashes were interred at the A. Philip Randolph Institute
16 in Washington, D.C.; and

17 WHEREAS, A. Philip Randolph had a significant impact on the
18 Civil Rights Movement from the 1930s onward; the Montgomery Bus
19 Boycott in Alabama was influenced by his methods of nonviolent
20 confrontation; nationwide, the Civil Rights Movement in the
21 1950s and 1960s used tactics pioneered by him, such as
22 encouraging African Americans to vote as a bloc, mass voter
23 registration, and training activists for nonviolent direct

1 action; many buildings, streets, and trains have been named in
2 his honor, including the A. Philip Randolph Pullman Porter
3 Museum in Chicago's Pullman Historic District; therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
5 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
6 we recognize the life of A. Philip Randolph, a trailblazing
7 leader, organizer, and social activist who championed
8 equitable labor rights for African American communities during
9 the 20th century, and we honor his legacy.