



HR0517

LRB103 35288 ECR 65321 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives wish to recognize Rebecca Lee Crumpler, M.D.
4 on her legacy of becoming the first Black female doctor in the
5 United States; and

6 WHEREAS, Dr. Crumpler was born Rebecca Davis in Delaware
7 on February 8, 1831; she was raised by an aunt in Pennsylvania
8 who often cared for sick neighbors, influencing her decision
9 to pursue a career in medicine; she proceeded to move to
10 Massachusetts and became a nurse in the 1850s; and

11 WHEREAS, During a time when most medical schools barred
12 Black students, Dr. Crumpler attended the New England Female
13 Medical College (NEFMC), the first school in the U.S. to train
14 women in the field of medicine; she graduated from NEFMC in
15 1864, thereby becoming the first Black female doctor in the
16 U.S.; and

17 WHEREAS, Dr. Crumpler began practicing medicine in Boston
18 before relocating to Richmond, Virginia towards the end of the
19 American Civil War; she collaborated with the Freedmen's
20 Bureau and other charity and missionary groups to care for
21 freed African Americans, many of whom had never seen a doctor
22 due to having been denied medical care by their former

1 enslavers or had suffered harrowing experiences by a racist
2 medical system that treated them as less than human; and

3 WHEREAS, Dr. Crumpler continued to practice after
4 returning to Boston in the late 1860s, where she treated
5 patients in and around her home, regardless of their ability
6 to pay; and

7 WHEREAS, Dr. Crumpler published A Book of Medical
8 Discourses in 1883, chronicling her experiences as a doctor
9 and featuring advice on treating illnesses in infants, young
10 children, and women of childbearing age; and

11 WHEREAS, Dr. Crumpler married twice and had one child,
12 Lizzie Sinclair Crumpler; and

13 WHEREAS, Dr. Crumpler passed away in Boston on March 9,
14 1895; and

15 WHEREAS, Dr. Crumpler's life and work demonstrate her
16 talent and determination to help others in the face of
17 prejudice against her gender and race; therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
19 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
20 we recognize Rebecca Lee Crumpler, M.D. on her legacy as the

1 first Black woman to earn a medical degree in the United States
2 and her contributions to the field of medicine.