



1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The Chicago Defender, one of the nation's most
3 influential Black newspapers, celebrated its 100th anniversary
4 on May 5, 2005; and

5 WHEREAS, The Defender kicked off a year-long celebration
6 that will feature a variety of public events, as well as 10
7 special centennial news editions; and

8 WHEREAS, The idea to launch the Black newspaper in Chicago
9 first began in August of 1893, when Robert S. Abbott came to
10 the Columbian Exposition in Chicago to perform spirituals with
11 his Hampton college choir, and was mesmerized by the words of
12 Frederick Douglas, who spoke thunderously about the
13 contributions of Negroes in America; and

14 WHEREAS, After finishing college, he launched the Chicago
15 Defender, printing the paper in his landlady's second story
16 apartment; by 1910, Mr. Abbott had a viable business and hired
17 his first employee; within a decade, the Defender was
18 outselling all other Black papers; the Defender was the first
19 Black newspaper to have a circulation over 100,000, the first
20 to have a health column, and the first to have a full page of
21 comic strips; and

22 WHEREAS, In 1940, upon Robert Abbott's death, John H. H.
23 Sengstacke, his nephew and heir, became the publisher and
24 editor of the newspaper; in 1956, the Defender began publishing
25 on a daily basis; four years before his death, John Sengstacke
26 stepped down as publisher and turned the reins over to his
27 brother, Frederick D. Sengstacke, who served as publisher until
28 2000, when Colonel Eugene Scott, U.S. Army (ret.), assumed the
29 role; and

30 WHEREAS, Mr. Abbott and Mr. Sengstacke were both very

1 politically influential men; Mr. Sengstacke was responsible
2 for helping Mayor Daley get elected, as well as integrating the
3 school board and fire and police departments in Chicago; he
4 also worked to have Branch Rickey integrate major league
5 baseball and to place the first Black federal judge on the
6 bench since Reconstruction; and

7 WHEREAS, In 2003, Real Times, Inc., led by Thomas Picou,
8 chairman of the board, purchased the chain of newspapers which
9 included the Chicago Defender; Real Times is the nation's
10 largest African American owned and operated newspaper chain in
11 the country; therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
13 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
14 we congratulate the Chicago Defender on the occasion of its
15 100th anniversary; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
17 presented to the Chicago Defender as an expression of our
18 esteem and best wishes for the future.