



HR0110

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are pleased to congratulate the members of the
4 NAACP on the occasion of the organization's 100th anniversary
5 on February 12, 2009; and

6 WHEREAS, The NAACP was founded on February 12, 1909, partly
7 in response to the continuing horrific practice of lynching and
8 the 1908 race riots in Springfield; appalled at the violence
9 that was committed against blacks, a group of white liberals
10 that included Mary White Ovington, Oswald Garrison Villard,
11 William English Walling, and Dr. Henry Moscowitz issued a call
12 for a meeting to discuss racial justice; some 60 people, seven
13 of whom were African American, signed the call, which was
14 released on the centennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth; the
15 group's stated goal was to secure for all people the rights
16 guaranteed in the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the United
17 States Constitution; and

18 WHEREAS, In 1910, the NAACP established its national office
19 in New York City and named a board of directors as well as a
20 president, Moorfield Storey, a white constitutional lawyer and
21 former president of the American Bar Association; the only
22 African American among the organization's executives, W.E.B.
23 Du Bois, was made director of publications and research and, in

1 1910, established the official journal of the NAACP, The
2 Crisis; The Crisis, one of the oldest black periodicals in
3 America, is well known as the premier crusading voice for civil
4 rights; and

5 WHEREAS, By 1913, the NAACP had established branch offices
6 in such cities as Boston, Massachusetts, Kansas City, Missouri,
7 Washington, D.C., Detroit, Michigan, and St. Louis, Missouri; a
8 series of early court battles, including a victory against a
9 discriminatory Oklahoma law that regulated voting by means of a
10 grandfather clause (Guinn v. United States, 1910), helped
11 establish the NAACP's importance as a legal advocate; the
12 fledgling organization also learned to harness the power of
13 publicity through its 1915 battle against the inflammatory
14 "Birth of a Nation", a motion picture that perpetuated
15 demeaning stereotypes of African Americans and glorified the Ku
16 Klux Klan; and

17 WHEREAS, NAACP membership grew rapidly during the 1910s,
18 from around 9,000 in 1917 to around 90,000 in 1919, with more
19 than 300 local branches; writer and diplomat James Weldon
20 Johnson became the association's first black secretary in 1920,
21 and Louis T. Wright, a surgeon, was named the first black
22 chairman of its board of directors in 1934; and

23 WHEREAS, The NAACP waged a 30-year campaign against

1 lynching, an issue among the association's top priorities; the
2 NAACP strongly supported the federal Dyer Bill, which would
3 have punished those who participated in or failed to prosecute
4 lynch mobs; although the bill would pass the U.S. House of
5 Representatives, the U.S. Senate never passed the bill or any
6 other anti-lynching legislation; most credit the resulting
7 public debate, which was fueled by the NAACP report "Thirty
8 Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1919", with
9 drastically decreasing the incidence of lynching; and

10 WHEREAS, In 1930, Walter F. White became the NAACP's new
11 secretary; Mr. White was instrumental not only in his research
12 on lynching but also in his successful block of segregationist
13 Judge John J. Parker's nomination by President Herbert Hoover
14 to the U.S. Supreme Court; Mr. White presided over the NAACP's
15 most productive period of legal advocacy; in 1930, the
16 association commissioned the Margold Report, which became the
17 basis for the successful reversal of the separate-but-equal
18 doctrine that had governed public facilities since 1896's
19 Plessy v. Ferguson; in 1935, Mr. White recruited Charles H.
20 Houston, the Howard University law school dean whose strategy
21 on school-segregation cases paved the way for his protege
22 Thurgood Marshall to prevail in 1954's Brown v. Board of
23 Education, as the NAACP chief counsel; and

24 WHEREAS, During the Great Depression, which was

1 disproportionately disastrous for African Americans, the NAACP
2 began to focus on economic justice; after years of tension with
3 white labor unions, the association cooperated with the newly
4 formed Congress of Industrial Organizations in an effort to win
5 jobs for black Americans; throughout the 1940s, the NAACP saw
6 enormous growth in membership, recording roughly 600,000
7 members by 1946; it continued to act as a legislative and legal
8 advocate, pushing for a federal anti-lynching law and for an
9 end to state-mandated segregation; and

10 WHEREAS, By the 1950s, the NAACP Legal Defense and
11 Educational Fund, headed by Mr. Marshall, secured the last of
12 these goals through *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), which
13 outlawed segregation in public schools; the NAACP's
14 Washington, D.C. bureau, led by lobbyist Clarence M. Mitchell
15 Jr., helped advance not only integration of the armed forces in
16 1948 but also passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1964,
17 and 1968, as well as the Voting Rights Act of 1965; the NAACP
18 also provided legal representation and aid to members of other
19 protest groups, including hundreds of Freedom Riders in the
20 1960s who had traveled to Mississippi to register black voters
21 and challenge Jim Crow policies; and

22 WHEREAS, Led by Roy Wilkins, who succeeded Walter White as
23 secretary in 1955, the NAACP cooperated with organizers A.
24 Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin in planning the 1963 March on

1 Washington; with the passage of major civil rights legislation
2 the following year, the Association accomplished what seemed an
3 insurmountable task and, in the following years, began to
4 diversify its goals; and

5 WHEREAS, Roy Wilkins retired as executive director in 1977
6 and was replaced by Benjamin L. Hooks, whose tenure included
7 the Bakke case (1978), in which a California court outlawed
8 several aspects of affirmative action; during his tenure, Dr.
9 Hooks is credited with implementing many NAACP programs that
10 continue today, including the NAACP ACT-SO (Academic,
11 Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics) competitions,
12 a major youth talent and skill initiative, and the Women in the
13 NAACP; Dr. Hooks served as executive director/chief executive
14 officer (CEO) of the NAACP from 1977 until 1992; and

15 WHEREAS, In 1993, Benjamin F. Chavis (now Chavis Muhammad)
16 became executive director/CEO of the NAACP; in 1995, Myrlie
17 Evers-Williams, the widow of Medgar Evers, became the third
18 woman to chair the NAACP, a position she held until 1998, when
19 she was succeeded by current Chairman Julian Bond; and

20 WHEREAS, In 1996, the NAACP National Board of Directors
21 changed the executive director/CEO title to president and CEO
22 when it selected Kweisi Mfume, a former congressman and head of
23 the Congressional Black Caucus, to lead the body; he was

1 followed by former telecommunications executive Bruce S.
2 Gordon in 2005; in May of 2008, the NAACP National Board of
3 Directors confirmed Benjamin T. Jealous, a former community
4 organizer, newspaper, editor and Rhodes Scholar, as the 14th
5 national executive of the esteemed organization; and

6 WHEREAS, Heading into the 21st century, the NAACP is
7 focused on disparities in economics, health care, education,
8 voter empowerment, and the criminal justice system, while also
9 continuing its role as legal advocate for civil rights issues
10 that affect millions of African Americans on a daily basis;
11 therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
13 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
14 congratulate the members of the NAACP on the occasion of the
15 organization's 100th anniversary and wish them continued
16 success and happiness in their future endeavors; and be it
17 further

18 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
19 presented to NAACP Chairman Julian Bond as a symbol of our
20 esteem and respect.