

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 114 Session of 2009

INTRODUCED BY BROWN, JOHNSON, EACHUS, PAYTON, THOMAS, DeWEESE, PARKER, COHEN, KORTZ, YOUNGBLOOD, SANTARSIERO, WATERS, KIRKLAND, DRUCKER, WHEATLEY, LEVDANSKY, LONGIETTI, SCAVELLO, PETRI, McCALL, DONATUCCI, GINGRICH, QUINN, HELM, MELIO, SAINATO, GRUCELA, DIGIROLAMO, MURPHY, McGEEHAN, FRANKEL, SIPTROTH, BRENNAN, SHAPIRO, REICHLEY, FABRIZIO, PAYNE, CLYMER AND MAHONEY, MARCH 5, 2009

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35, MARCH 5, 2009

A RESOLUTION

1 Commemorating the 100th anniversary of the National Association
2 for the Advancement of Colored People.

3 WHEREAS, As the nation's oldest and largest civil rights
4 organization, the National Association for the Advancement of
5 Colored People (NAACP), initially known as the National Negro
6 Committee, was formed as a result of mob-incited race riots in
7 Springfield, Illinois, the home of Abraham Lincoln, during the
8 summer of 1908; and

9 WHEREAS, The accounts of atrocities committed against people
10 of color during this time and the Springfield riots led Mary
11 White Ovington to call for a conference to discuss ways of
12 achieving civil, political and social equality for African
13 Americans; and

14 WHEREAS, According to Ms. Ovington's 1914 accounting, the
15 NAACP "was born in a little room of a New York apartment" during

1 a meeting attended by herself and Oswald Garrison Villard, both
2 descendants of abolitionists, William English Walling and Dr.
3 Henry Moskowitz; and

4 WHEREAS, It was the intent of Ms. Ovington and Mr. Villard to
5 call for a campaign that would move the country to take
6 immediate action on racial injustice; and

7 WHEREAS, Abraham Lincoln's birthday was chosen as the day to
8 issue the call because the founding members believed that "the
9 spirit of the abolitionists must be revived and that the Negro
10 must be treated on a plane of absolute political and social
11 equality"; and

12 WHEREAS, In addition to Ms. Ovington, Dr. Moskowitz and Mr.
13 Villard, the 1909 call was signed by a multiracial group of 60
14 people, seven of whom were African American, including Dr. W. E.
15 B. DuBois, Ida B. Wells-Barnett and Mary Church Terrell; and

16 WHEREAS, Other signers included Jane Adams, Samuel Bowles,
17 Professor W. L. Bulkely, Harriet Stanton Blatch, E. H. Clement,
18 Kate H. Claghorn, Professor John Dewey, Mary E. Dreier, Dr. John
19 L. Elliott, William Lloyd Garrison, Reverend Francis J. Grimke,
20 William Dean Howells, Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch, Reverend John Haynes
21 Holmes, Professor Thomas C. Hall, Hamilton Holt, Florence
22 Kelley, Reverend Frederick Lynch, Helen Marot, John E.
23 Milholland, Mary E. McDowell, Professor J. G. Merrill, Leonora
24 O'Riley, Reverend Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, Louis F. Post,
25 Reverend Dr. John P. Peters, Dr. Jane Robbins, Charles Edward
26 Russell, Joseph Smith, Anna Garlin Spencer, William M. Salter,
27 J. C. Phelps Stokes, Judge Wendell Stafford, Helen Stokes,
28 Lincoln Steffens, C. F. Thwing, Professor W. I. Thomas, Rabbi
29 Stephen S. Wise, Bishop Alexander Walters, Dr. William H. Ward,
30 Horace White, William English Walling, Lillian D. Wald, Dr. J.

1 Milton Waldron, Mrs. Rodman Wharton, Susan P. Wharton, Mary E.
2 Wooley and Professor Charles Zuebin; and

3 WHEREAS, Mr. Villard, president of The New York Evening Post,
4 published the call on the centennial of the birth of Abraham
5 Lincoln; and

6 WHEREAS, The call asked "believers in democracy to join in a
7 national conference for the discussion of present evils, the
8 voicing of protests and the renewal of the struggle for civil
9 and political liberty"; and

10 WHEREAS, The call led to the first national conference of the
11 NAACP in New York City in May 1909 to which more than 1,000
12 people were invited; and

13 WHEREAS, The NAACP organized as a permanent body at its
14 second national conference which convened in New York City in
15 May 1910; and

16 WHEREAS, Dr. W. E. B. DuBois, an African-American civil
17 rights activist, sociologist, educator, historian, writer,
18 editor, poet and scholar, was a founding member of the NAACP,
19 and from 1910 to 1934, he served as the director of publicity
20 and research, a member of the board of directors and editor of
21 The Crisis, the NAACP's monthly magazine; and

22 WHEREAS, The NAACP adopted the goal of Dr. DuBois' Niagara
23 Movement, which he and several other prominent African-American
24 scholars, professors and attorneys organized in 1905 to secure
25 the protection and rights guaranteed under the Thirteenth,
26 Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States
27 Constitution; and

28 WHEREAS, The growth of the NAACP was spearheaded by Joel
29 Spingarn, a founding member who helped develop the strategy of
30 legal advocacy to achieve social and political justice and who

served as board chairman of the NAACP in 1915 and as its president from 1929 to 1939; and

WHEREAS, Between 1917 and 1919, the membership of the NAACP grew from 9,000 to nearly 90,000; and

WHEREAS, Civil rights activist, diplomat and poet, James Weldon Johnson, became the first African-American secretary of the NAACP in 1920, and Louis T. Wright, a surgeon, was the first African-American chairperson appointed to the board of directors in 1934; and

WHEREAS, Over the decades, the legal advocacy of the NAACP enabled African Americans to be commissioned as officers in World War I, resulted in the admission of African-American students to the University of Maryland, led to a reversal of the separate-but-equal doctrine that had governed access to public accommodations since the United States Supreme Court's 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson ruling, ended state-sanctioned segregated facilities in interstate travel by train and bus and, under the leadership of Special Counsel Thurgood Marshall, eliminated segregation in public schools with its victory in Brown v. the Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, The NAACP used the media, the courts, the voting booth, lobbying, political pressure and moral persuasion to achieve its goals; and

WHEREAS, The activism and advocacy of the NAACP, among other things, pressured the Federal Government to ban discrimination, ensured a nondiscrimination policy in war-related industries and Federal employment during World War II, ended segregated lunch counters in more than 60 stores, caused the withdrawal or defeat of certain nominees to the United States Supreme Court and pushed television broadcasters to establish and institute

1 workplace diversity; and

2 WHEREAS, The relentless political and legal efforts of the
3 NAACP led to the passage of the Equal Employment Opportunity
4 Act, the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1964 and 1968, the Voting
5 Rights Act of 1965, the Voting Rights Reauthorization and
6 Amendment Act of 2006 and the Fair Housing Act; and

7 WHEREAS, Past and present prominent members of the NAACP
8 include Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Medgar Evers,
9 Roy Wilkins, Benjamin L. Hooks, Representative John Conyers and
10 Julian Bond, all pioneers in the struggle for civil, political
11 and economic liberty; and

12 WHEREAS, After the human and moral devastation caused by
13 Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the NAACP established the Disaster
14 Relief Fund to help hurricane survivors in Mississippi, Florida,
15 Texas, Alabama and Louisiana rebuild their lives; and

16 WHEREAS, The current membership of the NAACP totals more than
17 500,000 nationwide; and

18 WHEREAS, Since its inception in 1909, the mission of the
19 NAACP has been to ensure political, educational, social and
20 economic equality for all persons and to eliminate racial
21 discrimination and segregation through the democratic process;
22 therefore be it

23 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the
24 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania commemorate the centennial of the
25 founding of the National Association for the Advancement of
26 Colored People; and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the
28 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania honor and extend its appreciation
29 to the NAACP for its century-long commitment to justice and
30 equal protection under the law for all citizens of the United

1 States.