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1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The term "holocaust" is defined as, "a great or
3 complete devastation or destruction, especially by fire"; and

4 WHEREAS, Chicago, the third largest city in the United
5 States, is a thriving center of business, industry, and
6 culture, with approximately 83,733 registered black owned
7 businesses and approximately 40 black communities; it was also
8 the location of the Red Summer holocaust of 1919 and
9 approximately 25 other racial holocausts; and

10 WHEREAS, Black Wall Street - Illinois is an organization
11 formed to partner with black business districts and communities
12 in Illinois and abroad, setting a standard for building
13 sustainable black businesses and communities as a means to stop
14 violence, retaining current businesses while incubating new
15 businesses, and growing through the rich historical blueprint
16 in the tradition of growth and prosperity with the original
17 "Black Wall Street District" of Tulsa, Oklahoma's Greenwood
18 District; being ostracized from the mainstream, the business
19 and economic population's leaders of the "Black Wall Street"
20 Tulsa area reportedly used "Black Dollars" instead of United
21 States currency during the early 1900s, allowing them the
22 ability to track its recirculation within the district; and

1 WHEREAS, Racial holocausts not only destroyed black
2 communities, but destroyed the people in those communities as
3 well; the wealth that was established for their children and
4 the examples of pride and self-respect were destroyed as well,
5 causing black business districts to become nonexistent and
6 leaving the black communities in economic despair; although
7 there were some reparations, those came years later and were
8 not given to over 85% of the communities destroyed; and

9 WHEREAS, In June 2015, South Suburban Black Wall Street and
10 Black Wall Street - Illinois, with the help of Illinois State
11 Representative LaShawn Ford, formed and hosted their First
12 Annual Convention and 3-day tour from Chicago to the "Black
13 Wall Street District" in Tulsa, Oklahoma; and

14 WHEREAS, During the oil boom of the 1910s, the area of
15 northeast Oklahoma around Tulsa flourished, including the
16 Greenwood neighborhood, which came to be known as the "Black
17 Wall Street District"; many black men and women moved to the
18 area, structuring a system for wealth that produced some of the
19 first known black millionaires in the United States; the area
20 was home to several lawyers, realtors, doctors, and prominent
21 black businessmen, many of them multimillionaires; Greenwood
22 boasted a variety of thriving businesses, such as grocery
23 stores, clothing stores, barbershops, banks, hotels, cafes,
24 movie theaters, 2 newspapers, and many contemporary homes;

1 Greenwood residents enjoyed many luxuries that their white
2 neighbors did not, including indoor plumbing and a remarkable
3 school system; each dollar circulated 36 to 100 times,
4 sometimes taking a year for currency to leave the community;
5 Greenwood, Oklahoma implemented a blueprint for success
6 imitated by other black business communities across the world;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, The Tulsa, Oklahoma holocaust took place from May
9 31 to June 1, 1921; altercations between whites and blacks at
10 the jail led to a race war; a mob numbering more than 10,000
11 attacked the black district; machine-guns were brought into
12 use, 8 airplanes were employed to spy on the movements of the
13 blacks and, according to some, were used in bombing what was
14 considered the "colored" section of the town; by the time order
15 was restored, the entire business district of "Black Wall
16 Street" and many homes totaling over \$1.5 million in value were
17 said to have been destroyed by fire; in the wake of the
18 violence, 35 city blocks lay in charred ruins, over 800 people
19 were treated for injuries, 15,000 were left homeless, and an
20 estimated 1,000-plus deaths occurred; and

21 WHEREAS, Within 5 years of the massacre, surviving
22 residents who chose to remain in Tulsa rebuilt portions of the
23 district; they accomplished their goal despite the opposition
24 of many Tulsa political and business leaders and punitive

1 rezoning laws enacted to prevent reconstruction; it resumed
2 being a vital black community until segregation was overturned
3 by the federal government during the 1950s and 1960s;
4 desegregation encouraged blacks to integrate other surrounding
5 communities and Greenwood lost much of its original vitality;
6 since then, city leaders have attempted to strip the landmark
7 of its history; and

8 WHEREAS, Jim Crow segregation, legitimized by the Plessy v.
9 Ferguson (1896) Supreme Court ruling, forced black people to
10 use separate and usually inferior facilities; the southern
11 justice system systematically denied them equal protection
12 under the law and condoned the practice of vigilante mob
13 violence; as an aspiring migrant from Alabama wrote in a letter
14 to the Chicago Defender, "I am in the darkness of the south and
15 I am trying my best to get out"; blacks were ultimately forced
16 to create their own neighborhoods, business districts, and
17 economic base to survive across the country; and

18 WHEREAS, In 1898 in Wilmington, North Carolina, political
19 wars between prominent blacks and whites resulted in
20 accusations of sexual misconduct by black men against white
21 women; a prominent black newspaper editor, Alex Manly,
22 responded with an editorial suggesting that it was possible
23 that relations between white women and black men were
24 consensual, a taboo subject at the time; about 500 white men

1 attacked and burned Manly's office, along with other black
2 businesses; and

3 WHEREAS, Racial tension had been building in Atlanta,
4 Georgia in 1906 and race-baiting in the state's gubernatorial
5 election brought it to a boil; blacks in Georgia had begun to
6 prosper economically and socially and the Democratic
7 candidates for governor, Hoke Smith and Clark Howell, played on
8 fears of a rising black middle class; about 10,000 white men
9 and boys took to the streets, beating black men and burning
10 businesses and homes; and

11 WHEREAS, In August of 1908, a three-day racial holocaust
12 took place in Springfield, Illinois; white mobs headed for the
13 small eleven-by-nine block area considered the "Negro" section
14 and attacked homes and businesses in what is now downtown
15 Springfield; this holocaust, in the hometown of Abraham
16 Lincoln, shocked Jane Addams, who met the following year in New
17 York City with prominent black civil rights activist W.E.B.
18 Dubois to form the NAACP to promote the equality of rights and
19 the eradication of racial prejudice; and

20 WHEREAS, Between 1914 and 1920, roughly 500,000 black
21 southerners packed their bags and headed to the north,
22 fundamentally transforming the social, cultural, and political
23 landscape of cities such as Chicago, New York, Cleveland,

1 Pittsburgh, and Detroit; the Great Migration would reshape
2 black America and the nation as a whole; black southerners
3 faced a host of social, economic, and political challenges that
4 prompted their migration to the north; and

5 WHEREAS, The City of East St. Louis was the location of one
6 of the bloodiest racial holocausts in the 20th century; racial
7 tensions began to increase in February of 1917, when 470 black
8 workers were hired to replace white workers who had gone on
9 strike against the Aluminum Ore Company; the May 28th
10 disturbances were only a prelude to the violence that erupted
11 on July 2, 1917; no precautions were taken to ensure white job
12 security or to grant union recognition, which further increased
13 the already high level of hostilities; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1919, racial holocausts erupted in 26 U.S.
15 cities during the course of the year, including Washington, DC;
16 Knoxville, Tennessee; Longview, Texas; Phillips County,
17 Arkansas; Omaha, Nebraska; and Chicago; many of the holocausts
18 occurred during the summer months, in what is known as the "Red
19 Summer"; racial tension was particularly bad in northern
20 cities, as white soldiers returning from World War I found that
21 their jobs had been taken by blacks who had migrated north; in
22 addition, black soldiers returning from war became embittered
23 by the lack of civil rights extended to them, particularly
24 after they risked their lives fighting for their country; and

1 WHEREAS, Postwar Washington, D.C., which was roughly 75%
2 white, was a racial tinderbox; housing was in short supply and
3 jobs were so scarce that ex-doughboys in uniform panhandled
4 along Pennsylvania Avenue; however, Washington's black
5 community was the largest and most prosperous in the country,
6 with a small but impressive upper class of teachers, ministers,
7 lawyers, and businessmen concentrated in the LeDriot Park
8 neighborhood near Howard University; and

9 WHEREAS, Drawn by Chicago's meatpacking houses, railway
10 companies, and steel mills, the African-American population in
11 Chicago skyrocketed from 44,000 in 1910 to 235,000 in 1930; a
12 racial holocaust ensued on July 27, 1919, lasting until August
13 3, 1919; after the holocaust, varying estimates of the death
14 toll circulated, with the Chicago Police Chief estimating that
15 100 blacks had been killed; renowned journalist Ida B. Wells
16 reported in the Chicago Defender that 40 to 150 black people
17 were killed in the rioting, while the NAACP estimated deaths at
18 100 to 200; 6,000 African-Americans were left homeless after
19 their neighborhoods were burned; and

20 WHEREAS, In August of 1919, a racial holocaust in
21 Knoxville, Tennessee broke out after a white mob mobilized in
22 response to a black man being accused of murdering a white
23 woman; the 5,000-strong mob stormed the county jail searching

1 for the prisoner and freed 16 white prisoners, including
2 suspected murderers; after looting the jail and sheriff's
3 house, the mob moved on and attacked the African-American
4 business district; many of the city's black residents, aware of
5 the racial holocausts that had occurred across the country that
6 summer, had armed themselves and barricaded the intersection of
7 Vine and Central to defend their businesses; two platoons of
8 the Tennessee National Guard's 4th Infantry led by Adjutant
9 General Edward Sweeney arrived, but were unable to halt the
10 chaos; the mob broke into stores and stole firearms and other
11 weapons on their way to the black business district; upon their
12 arrival, the streets erupted in gunfire as black snipers
13 exchanged fire with both rioters and soldiers; the Tennessee
14 National Guard at one point fired 2 machine guns
15 indiscriminately into the neighborhood, eventually dispersing
16 the rioters; shooting continued sporadically for several
17 hours; outgunned, the black defenders gradually fled, allowing
18 the guardsmen to gain control of the area; newspapers placed
19 the death toll at just 2 persons, though eyewitness accounts
20 suggest the dead were so many that the bodies were dumped into
21 the Tennessee River, while others were buried in mass graves
22 outside the city; and

23 WHEREAS, A racial holocaust in Detroit, Michigan in 1943
24 flared from the increased friction over the sharp rise in the
25 black population, which led to competition with whites on the

1 job and housing markets; on June 20, 1943, rioting broke out on
2 Belle Isle, a recreational area used by both races but
3 predominately by blacks; fist fights escalated into a major
4 conflict; the first wave of looting and bloodshed began in the
5 "Paradise Valley" and later spread to other sections of the
6 city; white mobs attacked blacks in the downtown area and
7 traveled into black neighborhoods by car; by the time federal
8 troops arrived to halt the racial holocaust, black communities
9 and homes were damaged in amounts exceeding \$2 million; and

10 WHEREAS, Many blacks were economically distressed because
11 of the loss of homes, businesses, and jobs from previous racial
12 holocausts; they migrated to areas like Chicago, New York,
13 California, D.C., New Jersey, and Maryland, where they found
14 refuge and safety with other family members as well as entry
15 level employment, government subsidies, and low-income
16 housing; and

17 WHEREAS, Most of the black communities that were attacked
18 from 1914 to 1943 were completely abandoned or regentrified, or
19 have continued to struggle because of the social, racial, and
20 economic barriers that accompany generational poverty; as
21 descendants of black slaves struggled to recreate wealth and
22 make demands for equal education and social and workforce
23 opportunities, over 700 racial holocausts took place between
24 1964 and 1971, adding to the debilitating forces against blacks

1 which further pushed them behind the economic development
2 curve; and

3 WHEREAS, Racial holocausts in the United States and their
4 consequences for black communities have served as a constant
5 reminder of the open platforms for constant displacement
6 through the destruction of small businesses and housing which
7 has created the inability for blacks to rise above; lacking
8 business or homeowners insurance, blacks have left the land to
9 be bought by developers or surrendered for delinquent taxes;
10 solving the attendant poverty problems and re-building the
11 economic capacity that could re-circulate community dollars
12 would create sustainability; and

13 WHEREAS, Research by social scientists William Collins and
14 Robert Margo, published in the National Bureau of Economic
15 Research Working Paper 10243, shows that black communities have
16 never recovered from the economic impact created by racial
17 holocausts; the studies show economic disadvantages that were
18 created to keep black communities under the poverty level and
19 classified as the working poor; finally, the studies show the
20 impact of segregation on the rising prices of impoverished
21 urban developments and the socioeconomic factors that created
22 the downward spiral in black communities and real estate
23 values; and

1 WHEREAS, Many urban renewal initiatives and public housing
2 transformation projects, among other pilot programs, were
3 created in the City of Chicago and other cities; other small
4 business and community initiatives were also implemented;
5 however, other ethnic races entering black communities were
6 able to be funded and financed, while black business owners
7 were driven to close and work part-time minimum wage jobs to
8 survive; black citizens migrated to other communities in
9 surrounding areas; the initiatives were promoted as a way to
10 create access, growth, and equal opportunities for
11 communities, but promoted renting instead of property
12 ownership, thus creating an economic gap which allowed other
13 nationalities to fill the demands for small businesses and
14 property ownership in black communities; therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
16 HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
17 urge the United States Congress to rewrite history and redefine
18 the race riots as racial holocaust; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
20 delivered to President Donald Trump, U.S. Senate Majority
21 Leader Mitch McConnell, U.S. Senate Minority Leader Chuck
22 Schumer, U.S. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, U.S. House of
23 Representatives Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, and all members
24 of the Illinois Congressional Delegation.