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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, A. Philip Randolph was born Asa Philip Randolph on April 15, 1889 in Crescent City, Florida to parents who were staunch supporters of equal rights for African Americans and general human rights; in 1891, the Randolph family moved to Jacksonville, Florida, where A. Philip would live for most of his youth; he attended the Cookman Institute, one of the first institutions of higher education for blacks in the country; he was a member of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity; and

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WHEREAS, In 1911, after graduating from Cookman, A. Philip Randolph moved to the Harlem neighborhood of New York City; during this time, he studied English literature and sociology at City College and juggled a variety of jobs, including work as an elevator operator, a porter, and a waiter, while developing his rhetorical skills simultaneously; in 1912, he made his first move into politics and co-founded an employment agency, the Brotherhood of Labor, as a way to organize Black workers; and

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WHEREAS, In 1913, A. Philip Randolph married Howard University graduate and beauty shop entrepreneur Lucille Green; shortly thereafter, he organized a drama society in Harlem and performed in several productions; in 1917, he co-founded a political magazine, The Messenger, and began

1 publishing articles calling for the inclusion of more Blacks  
2 in the Armed Forces and war industry and demanding higher  
3 wages; he also tried to unionize African American shipyard  
4 workers in Virginia and elevator operators in New York City;  
5 and

6 WHEREAS, After World War I ended, A. Philip Randolph  
7 became a lecturer at the Rand School of Social Science; in the  
8 early 1920s, he unsuccessfully ran for office in New York  
9 State and became more convinced than ever that unions would be  
10 the best way for African Americans to improve their situation;  
11 and

12 WHEREAS, In 1925, A. Philip Randolph founded the  
13 Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) and served as its  
14 president; he sought to gain the union's official inclusion in  
15 the American Federation of Labor, the affiliates of which, at  
16 that time, frequently barred African Americans from  
17 membership; the BSCP met with resistance primarily from the  
18 Pullman Company, which was the largest employer of Blacks at  
19 that time; A. Philip persisted and won membership in the AFL in  
20 1937, making the BSCP the first African American union in the  
21 United States; and

22 WHEREAS, During the 1940s, A. Philip Randolph twice used  
23 mass protests as a means of influencing the policies of the

1 federal government; he planned a march on Washington to  
2 protest discrimination in the war industry workforce but  
3 called off the march after President Franklin D. Roosevelt  
4 issued an executive order that banned racial discrimination at  
5 government defense factories and established the first Fair  
6 Employment Practices Committee; he also organized the League  
7 for Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Against Military  
8 Segregation, which eventually led President Harry S. Truman to  
9 issue a 1948 executive order banning racial segregation in the  
10 U.S. Armed Forces; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1955, A. Philip Randolph became a vice  
12 president of the newly merged entity AFL-CIO (Congress of  
13 Industrial Organizations); in 1957, he organized a prayer  
14 pilgrimage to Washington, D.C. to draw attention to the delay  
15 of school desegregation being implemented in the South; he  
16 also organized the Youth Marches for Integrated Schools and  
17 formed the Negro American Labor Council in 1959; and

18 WHEREAS, In 1963, A. Philip Randolph was a principal  
19 organizer of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom,  
20 during which he spoke to an integrated crowd of nearly 250,000  
21 supporters; he shared the podium with Martin Luther King Jr.,  
22 who delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech; A. Philip and  
23 Dr. King were among the handful of civil rights leaders to meet  
24 with President John F. Kennedy after the march; and

1           WHEREAS, The following year, A. Philip Randolph was  
2 presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President  
3 Lyndon B. Johnson; soon after, he co-founded the A. Philip  
4 Randolph Institute, an organization aimed at studying the  
5 causes of poverty; and

6           WHEREAS, A. Philip Randolph resigned from his more than  
7 40-year tenure as president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car  
8 Porters in 1968; he also retired from public life and spent the  
9 next few years writing his autobiography; he died in bed at his  
10 New York City home on May 16, 1979 at age 90; he was cremated,  
11 and his ashes were interred at the A. Philip Randolph  
12 Institute in Washington, D.C.; therefore, be it

13           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
14 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
15 we recognize the life of A. Philip Randolph, American labor  
16 unionist and civil rights activist, and we honor his legacy.