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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives wish to congratulate the owners of the Chicago
4 Defender on the occasion of the newspaper's 110th anniversary
5 in 2015; and

6 WHEREAS, The Chicago Defender is a Chicago-based weekly
7 newspaper that was founded in 1905 by Robert S. Abbott for
8 primarily African American readers; the Chicago Defender has
9 attracted the writing talents of many famous writers, including
10 Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Willard Motley; and

11 WHEREAS, Robert Sengstacke Abbott, editor and founder of
12 the Chicago Defender, played a major role in influencing the
13 Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to
14 the urban North by means of strong, moralistic rhetoric in his
15 newspaper's editorials and political cartoons, the promotion
16 of Chicago as a destination, and the advertisement of
17 successful African American individuals as inspiration for
18 blacks in the South; the Defender consistently published
19 articles describing lynchings in the south with vivid
20 descriptions and unrestrained blame of the mobs of whites
21 typically involved, forcing readers to accept that these crimes
22 were "systematic and unremitting"; the art in the Defender,
23 particularly its political cartoons, explicitly addressed race

1 issues and advocated northern migration of African Americans;
2 the Defender was also used to initiate and advertise a "Great
3 Northern Drive" day, set for May 15, 1917; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1923, Robert Sengstacke Abbott and editor
5 Lucius Harper created the Bud Billiken Club and later organized
6 parades to promote healthy activity among black children in
7 Chicago; in 1929, the organization began the Bud Billiken
8 Parade and Picnic, which is still held annually in Chicago; in
9 the 1950s, under Sengstacke's direction, the Bud Billiken
10 Parade expanded and emerged as the largest single event in
11 Chicago; today, the event attracts more than one million
12 attendees and more than 25 million television viewers, making
13 it one of the largest parades in the country; and

14 WHEREAS, Robert Sengstacke Abbott's nephew, John H.
15 Sengstacke, took over the Defender in 1940; in 1948, he
16 encouraged President Harry S. Truman to integrate the armed
17 services, which President Truman did soon after; he also served
18 as a member of Truman's appointed committee to assure that the
19 military implemented this plan; and

20 WHEREAS, John Sengstacke brought together for the first
21 time major black newspaper publishers and created the National
22 Negro Publishers Association, later renamed the National
23 Newspaper Publishers Association; today, the Association

1 consists of over 200 member black newspapers; and

2 WHEREAS, Under John Sengstacke's leadership, the Defender
3 became a daily newspaper on February 6, 1956 and changed its
4 name to the Chicago Daily Defender, becoming the nation's
5 second black daily newspaper; it published as a daily until
6 2003; and

7 WHEREAS, In January of 2003, control of the Chicago
8 Defender and her sister publications was transferred to Real
9 Times, Inc., which was organized and led by Thom Picou and
10 Robert (Bobby) Sengstacke, John H. Sengstacke's son; today, the
11 paper continues to serve as a world-class source of local,
12 State, and national news; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
14 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
15 congratulate the owners of the Chicago Defender on the occasion
16 of the newspaper's 110th anniversary and wish them continued
17 success and happiness in the future; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
19 presented to the Chicago Defender as a symbol of our esteem and
20 respect.