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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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

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

21 WHEREAS, Race riots not only destroyed black communities,
22 but destroyed the people in those communities as well; the
23 wealth that was established for their children and the examples

1 of pride and self-respect were destroyed as well, causing black
2 business districts to become nonexistent and leaving the black
3 communities in economic despair; although there were some
4 reparations, those came years later and were not given to over
5 85% of the communities destroyed; and

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

11 WHEREAS, During the oil boom of the 1910s, the area of
12 northeast Oklahoma around Tulsa flourished, including the
13 Greenwood neighborhood, which came to be known as the "Black
14 Wall Street District"; many black men and women moved to the
15 area, structuring a system for wealth that produced some of the
16 first known black millionaires in the United States; the area
17 was home to several lawyers, realtors, doctors, and prominent
18 black businessmen, many of them multimillionaires; Greenwood
19 boasted a variety of thriving businesses, such as grocery
20 stores, clothing stores, barbershops, banks, hotels, cafes,
21 movie theaters, 2 newspapers, and many contemporary homes;
22 Greenwood residents enjoyed many luxuries that their white
23 neighbors did not, including indoor plumbing and a remarkable
24 school system; each dollar circulated 36 to 100 times,

1 sometimes taking a year for currency to leave the community;
2 Greenwood, Oklahoma implemented a blueprint for success
3 imitated by other black business communities across the world;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, The 25 Black Wall Street - Illinois attendees,
6 which consisted of business owners and workforce and community
7 leaders representing a plethora of different products and
8 services, participated in presentations and meetings with
9 businesses in the Black Wall Street Greenwood District on many
10 topics, including partnerships with Chicago communities,
11 international trade, and business franchising; and

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

1 WHEREAS, Within 5 years of the massacre, surviving
2 residents who chose to remain in Tulsa rebuilt portions of the
3 district; they accomplished their goal despite the opposition
4 of many Tulsa political and business leaders and punitive
5 rezoning laws enacted to prevent reconstruction; it resumed
6 being a vital black community until segregation was overturned
7 by the federal government during the 1950s and 1960s;
8 desegregation encouraged blacks to integrate other surrounding
9 communities and Greenwood lost much of its original vitality;
10 since then, city leaders have attempted to strip the landmark
11 of its history; and

12 WHEREAS, South Suburban Black Wall Street and Black Wall
13 Street - Illinois's mission is to promote wealth and
14 sustainability through changing, reinforcement, and
15 implementation of policies and procurements that effect access
16 to information and education and economic resources to build
17 sustainable black businesses and communities; Black Wall
18 Street - Illinois has partnered with members of the Black Wall
19 Street Greenwood District, community leaders, and State
20 Representatives with a commitment to help with the planning and
21 development of the remaining portions of Greenwood destroyed in
22 the race riot; and

23 WHEREAS, Through its vision and research, Black Wall Street

1 - Illinois has partnered all existing Black Wall Street
2 organizations to mobilize its structure in Chicago, identified
3 black communities that were targeted in race riot areas and
4 examined their current economic condition, and formulated a
5 strategic plan to conduct effective outreach to motivate
6 change; and

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

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

1 businesses; and

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

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

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

1 black America and the nation as a whole; black southerners
2 faced a host of social, economic, and political challenges that
3 prompted their migration to the north; and

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

13 WHEREAS, In 1919, race riots erupted in 26 U.S. cities
14 during the course of the year, including Washington, DC;
15 Knoxville, Tennessee; Longview, Texas; Phillips County,
16 Arkansas; Omaha, Nebraska; and Chicago; many of the riots
17 occurred during the summer months, in what is known as the "Red
18 Summer"; racial tension was particularly bad in northern
19 cities, as white soldiers returning from World War I found that
20 their jobs had been taken by blacks who had migrated north; in
21 addition, black soldiers returning from war became embittered
22 by the lack of civil rights extended to them, particularly
23 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 race riot ensued on July 27, 1919, lasting until August 3,
13 1919; after the riot, varying estimates of the death toll
14 circulated, with the Chicago Police Chief estimating that 100
15 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 race riot in Knoxville,
21 Tennessee broke out after a white mob mobilized in response to
22 a black man accused of murdering a white woman; the
23 5,000-strong mob stormed the county jail searching for the
24 prisoner and freed 16 white prisoners, including suspected

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

21 WHEREAS, A riot in Detroit, Michigan in 1943 flared from
22 the increased racial friction over the sharp rise in the black
23 population, which led to competition with whites on the job and
24 housing markets; on June 20, 1943, rioting broke out on Belle
25 Isle, a recreational area used by both races but predominately

1 by blacks; fist fights escalated into a major conflict; the
2 first wave of looting and bloodshed began in the "Paradise
3 Valley" and later spread to other sections of the city; white
4 mobs attacked blacks in the downtown area and traveled into
5 black neighborhoods by car; by the time federal troops arrived
6 to halt the riot, black communities and homes were damaged in
7 amounts exceeding \$2 million; and

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

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

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

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

22 WHEREAS, Many urban renewal initiatives and public housing
23 transformation projects, among other pilot programs, were
24 created in the City of Chicago and other cities; other small

1 business and community initiatives were also implemented;
2 however, other ethnic races entering black communities were
3 able to be funded and financed, while black business owners
4 were driven to close and work part-time minimum wage jobs to
5 survive; black citizens migrated to other communities in
6 surrounding areas; the initiatives were promoted as a way to
7 create access, growth, and equal opportunities for
8 communities, but promoted renting instead of property
9 ownership, thus creating an economic gap which allowed other
10 nationalities to fill the demands for small businesses and
11 property ownership in black communities; and

12 WHEREAS, Black Wall Street - Illinois will continue to have
13 monthly conference calls and meetings to discuss the
14 implementation and transparency of policies with leadership
15 that sustains and incubates black businesses and tax paying
16 citizens; boards and committees are being formed to help
17 articulate the specific needs to amend existing policies,
18 police the procurement process, and build statistical data that
19 speaks to the success of these policies and what is needed to
20 create economic progress; and

21 WHEREAS, Black Wall Street - Illinois will conduct a
22 statewide tour of black business communities starting in the
23 Chicagoland area in July of 2016 to identify the strengths and
24 areas for improvement, generate access to capital, and the

1 recirculation of public and private dollars within those
2 communities; the promotion of partnerships for local community
3 resources is a blueprint for building local profits that create
4 access to local contracts and workforce development
5 opportunities; implementing this plan will lower crime and
6 promote first time homeowners and businesses; therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
8 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
9 recognize Black Wall Street - Illinois as a premier
10 organization in the State of Illinois and thank them for their
11 work in Illinois communities; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
13 presented to the members of Black Wall Street - Illinois as
14 symbol of our esteem and respect.