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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 342

Offered January 14, 2009

Prefiled January 14, 2009

Commemorating the Centennial of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Patrons—Marsh, Petersen and Reynolds

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was formed on February 12, 1909, by a diverse group of prominent African American and white citizens following the turbulent summer of 1908 in Springfield, Illinois, which was filled with race riots that demonstrated the need for an effective civil rights organization in America; and

WHEREAS, incorporated in 1911, the NAACP declared its mission as the promotion of equality of rights, the eradication of caste and racial prejudice in the United States, the advancement of the interest of colored citizens and impartial suffrage for them, and an increase in opportunities to secure justice in the courts, education for children, employment according to ability, and complete equality before law; and

WHEREAS, although at its founding the executive board of the NAACP was composed of predominantly white and Jewish citizens and one African American, Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, and the organization elected its first African American president in 1975, its early years were devoted to overturning Jim Crow laws that legalized racial discrimination; and

WHEREAS, throughout the NAACP's illustrious history, it helped to desegregate the United States Armed Forces in 1914, litigated against disenfranchisement, fought to ban lynching of African Americans throughout the nation, appealed the death sentences of African American men whose convictions were obtained by beatings and electric shock, fought successfully to expand the federal courts' oversight of states' criminal justice systems, and challenged the white primary system used to bar African Americans from the political process; and

WHEREAS, its fight to dismantle segregation wherever it occurred continued for decades, and its Legal Defense and Educational Fund, led by Charles Hamilton Houston and Thurgood Marshall, the first African American Supreme Court justice, launched a campaign to challenge segregated public schools and institutions of higher education, culminating in the historic 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954); and

WHEREAS, the NAACP pushed for victory in full desegregation across the South and became actively involved with other groups during the Civil Rights Movement, and pressed for federal civil rights legislation, specifically the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and

WHEREAS, by the end of the 20th century, the NAACP focused on economic justice and development and quality education, and the mission of the organization has succeeded for 100 years through the collective courage of thousands of people of all races, nationalities, and faiths united under one premise—that all men and women are created equal; and

WHEREAS, the nation and the world are the beneficiaries of the vision, work, and sacrifices of the founders and members of the NAACP, the nation's oldest civil rights organization, for their tireless efforts and service to ensure that the principles upon which this nation was founded are manifested in the lives of every citizen without regard to race, creed, nationality, or gender; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly commemorates the Centennial of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to Julian Bond, Chairman, and Benjamin Todd Jealous, President and CEO, of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and King Salim Khalfani, Executive Director, Virginia State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, requesting that they further disseminate copies of this resolution to their respective constituents so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter.

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