

HR 9083

2013

1 House Resolution

2 A resolution honoring the life and accomplishments of
3 Asa Philip Randolph.

4
5 WHEREAS, born April 15, 1889, in Crescent City, Florida,
6 Asa Philip Randolph was the second of two sons born to Reverend
7 James William Randolph and Elizabeth Robinson Randolph, both
8 strong supporters of equal rights for African Americans, and

9 WHEREAS, in 1891, after moving to Jacksonville, the family
10 settled into a well-established African-American community where
11 James and Elizabeth Randolph taught their children the
12 importance of education and that color was less important than a
13 person's character and conduct, and

14 WHEREAS, Asa Randolph attended the Cookman Institute in
15 East Jacksonville, one of the first institutions of higher
16 education for African Americans in the country, where he was
17 valedictorian of his 1907 graduating class, and

18 WHEREAS, soon after moving to New York where he began to
19 hone his views on the fight for social equality, Asa Randolph
20 married Lucille Green, a Howard University graduate who shared
21 his socialist politics, joined the Socialist Party, and he began
22 to harangue the crowds at Harlem's soapbox corner, 135th Street
23 and Lenox Avenue, about socialism and the importance of
24 militant-class consciousness, and

25 WHEREAS, in 1917, William White, president of the
26 Headwaiters and Sidewaiters Society of Greater New York,
27 approached Asa Randolph and asked him in conjunction with close
28 collaborator Chandler Owen to edit the Messenger, the monthly

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29 | magazine of the society, and the first issue was published in
30 | November of that year, marking the debut of one of the most
31 | brilliantly edited magazines in the history of Black journalism,
32 | and

33 | WHEREAS, as founding president of the Brotherhood of
34 | Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), Asa Randolph sought to enter the
35 | union in the American Federation of Labor (AFL), which
36 | frequently barred blacks from membership, and in 1937 with the
37 | win of its first major contract with the Pullman Company the
38 | BSCP finalized its membership into the AFL, making them the
39 | first successful African-American trade union in the United
40 | States, and

41 | WHEREAS, becoming one of the most widely known
42 | spokespersons for black working class interests in the country,
43 | Asa Randolph called on the support of nearly 100,000 loyal Black
44 | citizens to march on Washington, D.C., to protest President
45 | Franklin D. Roosevelt's refusal to issue an executive order to
46 | ban discrimination against black workers in the defense
47 | industry, and

48 | WHEREAS, six days before the march was to commence,
49 | President Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 8802 on June 25,
50 | 1941, declaring "there shall be no discrimination in the
51 | employment of workers in defense industries or government
52 | because of race, creed, color, or national origin" in addition
53 | to establishing the Fair Employment Practices Commission to
54 | oversee the order, and

55 | WHEREAS, Asa Randolph boldly founded the League for
56 | Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Against Military Segregation,

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57 | urging young soldiers both black and white to refuse to
58 | cooperate with the injustice of Jim Crow, and the public
59 | outcries of military injustice rang loudly, pressuring President
60 | Harry S. Truman to order the end to military segregation on July
61 | 26, 1948, and

62 | WHEREAS, drawing much-needed attention to civil rights
63 | issues in the South, Asa Philip Randolph was named chair of the
64 | 1963 March on Washington where Martin Luther King, Jr., gave his
65 | historic "I Have a Dream" speech, and in 1964 Asa Randolph was
66 | awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and

67 | WHEREAS, continuing his fight for economic justice,
68 | Randolph later formed the A. Philip Randolph Institute to
69 | promote trade unionism in the black community, and

70 | WHEREAS, Asa Philip Randolph is considered one of the most
71 | prominent African-American trade unionists in American history
72 | and one of the strongest advocates for civil rights and racial
73 | equality, NOW, THEREFORE,

74 |

75 | Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
76 | Florida:

77 |

78 | That Asa Philip Randolph is honored and celebrated for a
79 | distinguished legacy of accomplishments and contributions that
80 | have bettered the lives of countless Americans.