

## 2009-J3068

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION celebrating the 100th Birthday of the late Kwame Nkrumah, and paying tribute to his many contributions to Pan-Africanism on Monday, September 21, 2009

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to honor those distinguished individuals whose lifework and civic endeavor served to enhance the quality of life in their communities; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to celebrate the 100th Birthday of the late Kwame Nkrumah, and to pay tribute to his many contributions to Pan-Africanism on Monday, September 21, 2009; and  
WHEREAS, In 1909, Kwame Nkrumah was born to Madam Nyaniba in Nkroful, Gold Coast; he graduated from the prestigious Achimota School in Accra in 1930, studied at a Roman Catholic Seminary, and taught at a Catholic school in Axim; in 1935, he left Ghana for the United States, receiving a BA degree from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania in 1939, where he pledged the Mu Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., and later received an STB (Bachelor of Sacred Theology) degree in 1942; and

WHEREAS, Kwame Nkrumah earned a Master of Science degree in Education from the University of Pennsylvania in 1942, and a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy the following year; while lecturing in political science at Lincoln University, he was elected president of the African Students Organization of America and Canada; and

WHEREAS, As an undergraduate at Lincoln University, Kwame Nkrumah participated in at least one student theater production and published an essay on European government in Africa in the student newspaper, THE LINCOLNIAN; during his time in the United States, he preached at black Presbyterian Churches in Philadelphia and New York City, read books about politics and divinity, and tutored students in philosophy; and

WHEREAS, Kwame Nkrumah encountered the ideas of Marcus Garvey, and in 1943 met and began a lengthy correspondence with Trinidadian Marxist C.L.R. James, Russian expatriate Raya Dunayevskaya, and Chinese-American Grace Lee Boggs, all of whom were members of a US based Trotskyist intellectual cohort; Kwame Nkrumah later credited James with teaching him 'how an underground movement worked'; and

WHEREAS, Kwame Nkrumah arrived in London in May of 1945 intending to study at the LSE; after meeting with George Padmore, he helped organize the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester, England; he then founded the West African National Secretariat to work for the decolonization of Africa; in addition, he served as Vice-President of the West African Students' Union (WASU); and

WHEREAS, Returning to Ghana in 1947, Kwame Nkrumah became general secretary of the newly founded United Gold Coast Convention, but split from it in 1949 to form the Convention People's Party (CPP); and

WHEREAS, After his 'positive action' campaign created disturbances in 1950, Kwame Nkrumah was jailed, but when the CPP swept the 1951 elections, he was freed to form a government, and he led the colony to independence as Ghana in 1957; and

WHEREAS, Kwame Nkrumah was an influential 20th century advocate of Pan-Africanism, and the leader of Ghana and its predecessor state, the Gold Coast, from 1952 to 1966; over his lifetime, he was awarded honorary doctorates by Lincoln University; Moscow State University; Cairo University in Cairo, Egypt; Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland; Humboldt University in the former East Berlin; and several other institutions; and

WHEREAS, Kwame Nkrumah was the motivating force behind the movement for independence of Ghana, then British West Africa, and its first pres-

ident when it became independent in 1957; his numerous writings address Africa's political destiny; and

WHEREAS, A firm believer in African liberation, Kwame Nkrumah pursued

a radical Pan-African policy, playing a key role in the formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963; as head of government, he was less successful however, and as time passed he was accused of forming a dictatorship; and

WHEREAS, In 1964, Kwame Nkrumah formed a one-party state; he was overthrown by the military in 1966, with the help of western backing and spent his last years in exile, dying in Bucharest, Romania, on April 27, 1972; his legacy and dream of a "United States of Africa" still remains a goal among many; and

WHEREAS, Kwame Nkrumah's distinguished record merits the recognition and respectful tribute of this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to celebrate the 100th Birthday of the late Kwame Nkrumah, and to pay tribute to his many contributions to Pan-Africanism on Monday, September 21, 2009.