



HR0432

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The City of Mound Bayou, Mississippi, "the Jewel  
3 of the Delta", founded by formerly enslaved African Americans  
4 Isaiah Thornton Montgomery and Benjamin Green in 1887,  
5 represents one of the most extraordinary stories of Black  
6 resilience, excellence, and self-determination in American  
7 history; and

8           WHEREAS, This all-Black town served as a critical haven  
9 for African American advancement during the Jim Crow era,  
10 playing a pivotal role in the Civil Rights Movement, the  
11 economic empowerment of Black communities, and the protection  
12 of families, such as that of Emmett Till and Mamie  
13 Till-Mobley; and

14           WHEREAS, The legacy of Mound Bayou resonates deeply in  
15 Cook County through the lives and public service of prominent  
16 figures with familial ties to the town, including Reverend B.  
17 Herbert Martin, who was pastor to the Late Honorable Harold  
18 Washington, the first Black mayor of Chicago, the late John H.  
19 Stroger Jr., who was the first Black president of the Cook  
20 County Board of Commissioners, his late sister Cleo  
21 Stroger-Dunnings, who was an esteemed educator, the late Coach  
22 Derrick Dunnings, who was Cleo's husband, and the late Donna  
23 Lori Dunnings, who was Cleo and Derrick's daughter and served

1 with distinction as Cook County's chief financial officer; and

2 WHEREAS, These leaders not only contributed immensely to  
3 the advancement of Cook County but also carried forward the  
4 values of service, perseverance, and community uplift rooted  
5 in Mound Bayou's founding vision; and

6 WHEREAS, The Taborian Hospital was founded in Mound Bayou  
7 in 1942 by the International Order of Twelve Knights and  
8 Daughter of Tabor led by Sir Perry Monroe Smith (Priscilla  
9 Anderson-Smith) as the second Black hospital in Mississippi,  
10 the first all-Black staffed hospital in the United States of  
11 America (Chief Surgeon Dr. T.R.M. Howard), and the first HMO  
12 in the United States of America; and

13 WHEREAS, U.S. President Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt  
14 proclaimed Mound Bayou as the most remarkable town in the  
15 south; and

16 WHEREAS, The Chicago screening of episode one of Mound  
17 Bayou: The Most Remarkable Town in the South at the DuSable  
18 Black History Museum and Education Center on Friday, August  
19 29, 2025 from 6:00PM to 9:00PM, featuring a reception,  
20 screening, and post-screening discussion, serves as a powerful  
21 tribute to this vital chapter in American history; and

1           WHEREAS, A number of individuals contributed to this  
2 screening of Mound Bayou: the Most Remarkable Town in the  
3 South, including the screening co-hosts Reverend Dr. Wallace  
4 "Gator" Bradley and U.S. Congressman Danny K. Davis, Executive  
5 Producers Kahari "The BooRay! King" Nash, Ted Field, and Tony  
6 Brown KM, producers Dr. Ron Davis and John P. Hamilton,  
7 historians Myrna Smith-Thompson, Alma Campbell J.D., Rosie Lee  
8 Ross, E. L. Bridgeforth, and Dr. David T. Beito, community  
9 leaders Brenda Bell-Brooks, a descendant of Wade Riley Bell  
10 who was a charter member of the Bolivar County Farm Bureau  
11 Negro Division Headquartered in Mound Bayou, which was  
12 organized in 1953 representing 33,000 Acres of Negro Farmland  
13 with a tax assessed value of \$7,500,000.00, and Zee Alphin  
14 Anderson Barron, the first director and organizer of Coahoma  
15 Junior College, Coahoma Community College, which was the first  
16 state-supported junior college for Negroes in Mississippi, as  
17 well as U.S. Congressman Bennie G. Thompson, Civil Rights Icon  
18 Ambassador Andrew J. Young, and all the sponsors who brought  
19 this project to fruition; therefore, be it

20           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
21 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
22 we recognize the importance of Mound Bayou, Mississippi,  
23 commend all persons involved in bringing the Mound Bayou  
24 project to fruition, and urge all Illinois residents to  
25 reflect on the enduring impact of Mound Bayou as a symbol of

1 Black excellence, economic sovereignty, and cultural pride;  
2 and be it further

3       RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
4 presented to Reverend Dr. Wallace "Gator" Bradley as a symbol  
5 of our respect and esteem.