

Senate Resolution 461

By: Senators Halpern of the 39th, Orrock of the 36th, Jones II of the 22nd, Davenport of the 44th, Butler of the 55th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and commending the 105th anniversary of the Atlanta Branch of the National
2 Association for the Advance of Colored People (NAACP); recognizing the countless
3 successes and efforts of the organization since its inception; and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, the Atlanta Branch of the NAACP was chartered by civil rights pioneers James
5 Weldon Johnson, Harry Pace, Dr. Charles Johnson, Dr. Louis Wright, and Walter White in
6 1917; and

7 WHEREAS, the Atlanta NAACP immediately began working for the betterment of Black
8 people, providing refuge in the aftermath of World War I to Black Georgians who fled from
9 oppressive violence and peonage in rural parts of the state and giving them legal and
10 financial assistance; and

11 WHEREAS, the NAACP dubbed Georgia the "Empire State of Lynching" for its record of
12 racial vigilantism, which the Atlanta Branch fought throughout the 1930s and 40s despite
13 other southern chapters shuttering due to suppression by law and intimidation by force; and

14 WHEREAS, Reverend Martin Luther King Sr. served on the Atlanta Branch's executive
15 committee, and his son, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., chaired the youth membership committee
16 of the Atlanta NAACP Youth Council in 1944; and

17 WHEREAS, throughout the 1950s and 60s, the Atlanta Branch fought segregation by filing
18 lawsuits and petitions against golf courses, restaurants, transportation, and other businesses
19 and continuing the quest for quality education and desegregation of Atlanta Public Schools
20 that Walter White had initiated at the start; and

21 WHEREAS, the Atlanta Branch was instrumental in organizing the March on Washington
22 for Jobs and Freedom, the legendary march that attracted 250,000 people to rally for the civil
23 and economic rights of Black Americans in the nation's capital; and

24 WHEREAS, throughout the 20th century, outstanding leaders continued to guide the Atlanta
25 Branch, including Samuel W. Williams, C. Miles Smith, Lonnie King, Julian Bond, Amelia
26 Thomas, and Jondelle Johnson; and

27 WHEREAS, Mrs. Johnson served as executive director of the Atlanta Branch from 1972 to
28 1988; during which time she established new committees and programs; increased
29 membership by nearly 300 percent; and achieved victory in several lawsuits, including ones
30 against the United States Postal Service's main branch relocation, the Postal Credit Union's
31 hiring policies, and the Joint Board of Tax Assessors' plan for a tax rollback for the affluent
32 north side; and

33 WHEREAS, Reverend R.L. White served as president from 1997-2014, moving the Atlanta
34 Branch into the 21st century under his leadership; and

35 WHEREAS, Richard Rose assumed the leadership role as president of the NAACP Atlanta
36 Branch in 2015 and began pursuing a relentless focus on voter registration, housing and
37 urban development, employment discrimination, education, job placement and training,
38 women and minority employment, police brutality, affirmative action, and legislative
39 monitoring; and

40 WHEREAS, the Atlanta Branch has been a driving force in southern civil rights for over a
41 century, has never wavered in its pursuit of justice, and continues to be a beacon of equality
42 to this day.

43 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
44 recognize and commend the 105th anniversary of the Atlanta Branch of the National
45 Association for the Advance of Colored People (NAACP) and welcome its leaders both
46 present and past to always share their perspective and wisdom under the Gold Dome to
47 ensure that we are pursuing an equitable, just future.

48 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
49 to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the Atlanta Branch
50 of the National Association for the Advance of Colored People (NAACP).