



Introduced Version

**HOUSE
RESOLUTION No. _____**

*Introduced by: Shackelford, Bartlett, Harris, Hatcher,
Jackson, Pack, Porter, Pryor, Smith V, Summers, Clere*

1 A HOUSE RESOLUTION celebrating the 50th anniversary
2 of the National Black Political Convention.

3 *Whereas, Black leaders across the United States began to*
4 *talk about the need for political activism and holding a meeting*
5 *where people could gather to discuss ideas of change and*
6 *encourage more Black Americans to run for public office;*

7 *Whereas, Organizers chose a high school gym in Gary,*
8 *Indiana, as the location for the event. From March 10 through*
9 *12, 1972, more than 10,000 people from nearly all 50 states*
10 *attended the first National Black Political Convention;*

11 *Whereas, The November 1972 election, seven months after*
12 *the convention in March, brought the largest single-year*
13 *increase in Black Indiana legislators up until that time,*

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1 *including Robert L. Freeland, William Alexander, Rudolph*
2 *Clay, William A. Crawford, Jewell Gene Harris, and Julia M.*
3 *Porter Carson;*

4 *Whereas, During the 49 years from 1972 to 2021, there have*
5 *been 39 Black legislators from nine counties to serve in the*
6 *Indiana House and Senate. Most have come from Marion and*
7 *Lake counties, while St. Joseph, Parke, Vermillion, Delaware,*
8 *Porter, Vigo, and Warren counties have also elected members*
9 *to the House and Senate;*

10 *Whereas, Today, there are 14 members of the Indiana Black*
11 *Legislative Caucus, an organization formed in 1979 to*
12 *organize and focus the talents and energies of African*
13 *American legislators;*

14 *Whereas, The Indiana Black Legislative Caucus and one of*
15 *its precursors, the Indiana Democrat African American*
16 *Caucus, began out of the spirit of supporting the efforts of*
17 *Black people to work in public service and to encourage them*
18 *to run for elected offices on every level, and each organization*
19 *came from the energy and unity that was born at the Gary*
20 *convention in 1972;*

21 *Whereas, There is no doubt that the National Black Political*
22 *Convention was a turning point in Black American history that*
23 *brought Black people into the institutions where people make*
24 *new laws and change public policy;*

25 *Whereas, The convention led them toward opportunities to*
26 *help Black people take their rightful seat at the table where they*
27 *could have a voice and effect change in Indiana cities and*
28 *towns as well as in the statehouse;*

29 *Whereas, In 1972, approximately 300 Blacks held elected*
30 *office throughout America. In large part, as a result of the 1972*
31 *convention, today over 10,000 African Americans sit as elected*
32 *officials all over the nation; and*

33 *Whereas, Attendees emerged from the Gary event looking for*
34 *ways to help others, and, through the years, the world is still*
35 *hearing the echoes of what they learned. The legacy of the*



1 *National Black Political Convention lives on in those who*
2 *never set foot in that West Side gym in Gary, Indiana, in 1972:*
3 *Therefore,*

4 *Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the*
5 *General Assembly of the State of Indiana:*

6 SECTION 1. That the Indiana House of Representatives
7 celebrates the 50th anniversary of the National Black Political
8 Convention.

9 SECTION 2. That the Principal Clerk of the House of
10 Representatives transmit a copy of this resolution to
11 Representative Robin Shackleford for distribution.

