

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 119

Expressing the sense of Congress that the United States Postal Service should issue a postage stamp in commemoration of Carl B. Stokes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 5, 2009

Mr. CLAY (for himself and Ms. FUDGE) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that the United States Postal Service should issue a postage stamp in commemoration of Carl B. Stokes.

Whereas Carl B. Stokes was a political pioneer and a crusader for civil rights;

Whereas Carl B. Stokes was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on June 21, 1927, to Charles Stokes, a laundry worker, and Louise Stokes, a domestic cleaning woman;

Whereas Carl B. Stokes was raised in the Outhwaite Homes, Cleveland's first federally funded housing project;

Whereas in 1944, Carl B. Stokes dropped out of East Technical High School and enlisted in the United States Army, from which he was honorably discharged in 1947,

and, at age 20, he returned to, and subsequently graduated from, East Technical High School;

Whereas Carl B. Stokes earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota in 1954 and graduated from Cleveland-Marshall Law School with a Doctor of Laws degree in 1956;

Whereas Carl B. Stokes was admitted to the Ohio Bar and became an assistant city prosecutor for Cleveland, Ohio;

Whereas Carl B. Stokes's accomplishments included several first's for an African-American: specifically, in addition to being the first Black mayor of a major American city, he was the first African-American ever to be directly elected to all 3 branches of Government;

Whereas in November 1962, Carl B. Stokes became the first Black Democrat ever to be elected to the Ohio General Assembly;

Whereas, on November 13, 1967, Carl B. Stokes received international attention when he was sworn in as Mayor of the City of Cleveland, and, since Cleveland was only 37 percent Black at that time, it also marked the first time that an African-American was elected mayor of a predominantly White major city in the United States;

Whereas in that election, Clevelanders chose Carl B. Stokes, the grandson of a slave, over Seth Taft, the grandson of a United States president;

Whereas subsequently, Carl B. Stokes was asked by the White House to represent the United States on goodwill trips to Europe, in which capacity he was received by many heads of state, including nations with which relations were strained at the time, such as Romania and Yugoslavia; he was also sent to the Caribbean, on mis-

sions to Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, Barbados, and Trinidad;

Whereas the election of Carl B. Stokes as America's first Black mayor of a major American city was the impetus and inspiration for Black political aspiration all over the Nation;

Whereas Carl B. Stokes's pioneering political achievement in a predominantly White city caused Blacks in a number of other major cities, including New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Atlanta, to believe that if Carl B. Stokes could be elected mayor of Cleveland, they too could be elected mayor of their city, which, in fact, proved to be the case;

Whereas in 1970, the 15,000 member National League of Cities, composed of mayors and other local officials from throughout the Nation, unanimously voted Carl B. Stokes president-elect of their organization—the first Black official ever to hold that office;

Whereas after completing 2 terms as mayor, Carl B. Stokes decided to end his political career and begin a new one in broadcast journalism;

Whereas in April 1972, Carl B. Stokes became the first Black anchorman to appear daily on a television news program in New York City, at the National Broadcasting Company's flagship station, WNBC-TV;

Whereas in September 1980, after 8 years as an Emmy award-winning broadcast journalist, Carl B. Stokes returned to Cleveland to the practice of law, and became the first Black lawyer to serve as general counsel to a major American labor union—the United Auto Workers, Regions 2 and 2A;

Whereas, on November 8, 1983, Carl B. Stokes was elected Judge of Cleveland Municipal Court, Ohio's largest court;

Whereas a few weeks later, on December 22nd, his 12 colleagues elected him Administrative Judge of the Court, and on January 9, 1984, his fellow judges elected him as their Presiding Judge;

Whereas never before had a freshman judge been elected both Administrative Judge and Presiding Judge of the Cleveland Municipal Court;

Whereas, on August 26, 1994, President William J. Clinton appointed then-Judge Carl B. Stokes as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States to the Republic of the Seychelles;

Whereas while serving as Ambassador, Carl B. Stokes became ill, returned to Cleveland, Ohio, and, on April 3, 1996, died;

Whereas once a high school dropout, Carl B. Stokes received honorary doctorate degrees from 14 colleges and universities around the country, and served as a visiting lecturer at academic universities and business institutions throughout the United States, Trinidad, Haiti, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, England, France, Germany, and Italy;

Whereas in recognition of Carl B. Stokes's extraordinary achievements, Public Law 105-218, which was signed into law on August 7, 1998, designated the United States courthouse in Cleveland, Ohio, as the Carl B. Stokes United States Courthouse; and

Whereas Carl B. Stokes remains one of the greatest political leaders in American history; his feat of being elected America's first Black mayor of a major American city

changed the landscape of politics in this Nation and made him the first Black American to acquire the political power to break down racial barriers and offer unprecedented opportunities for minorities: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—*

3 (1) the United States Postal Service should
4 issue a postage stamp commemorating Carl B.
5 Stokes; and

6 (2) the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
7 should recommend to the Postmaster General that
8 such a stamp be issued.

○