

1 State of Arkansas
2 81st General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 1997
4 By: Senator Walker

S.R. 6

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7 **SENATE RESOLUTION**

8 COMMENDING DR. WILLIAM H. TOWNSEND FOR HIS TWENTY-FOUR
9 YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE ARKANSAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

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11 **Subtitle**

12 COMMENDING DR. WILLIAM H. TOWNSEND FOR
13 HIS TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE
14 ARKANSAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

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16 WHEREAS, Dr. William H. Townsend was born near West Point, Mississippi,
17 and moved with his family to Earle, Arkansas, when he was four years old; and

18 WHEREAS, he earned a B.S. degree in agriculture from Tuskegee Institute
19 at Tuskegee, Alabama, in 1941; and

20 WHEREAS, he was inducted into the United States Army, serving for 45
21 months in Northern Africa, Italy, France, Germany and England, and studying at
22 Nottingham University for nine months while in England; and

23 WHEREAS, he attended Howard University in Washington, D.C. for a year of
24 pre-medical studies and then in 1950 earned a degree in optometry from
25 Northern Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago; and

26 WHEREAS, in August of 1950, upon passing the Arkansas Optometric Board
27 and beginning his practice in Little Rock, Dr. Townsend became the first
28 African-American licensed optometrist in Arkansas; and

29 WHEREAS, in his 46 years of practice he has found time for public
30 service, contributing to the community in his duties as president of the
31 Arkansas Council on Human Relations, a member of the local, state, and
32 national Optometric Associations, receiving the Arkansas Optometrist of the
33 Year Award in 1981, a lifetime member of the NAACP, board member of the Urban
34 League, deacon and trustee of Mount Zion Baptist Church, treasurer of
35 Professional Service, Inc., member of Pi Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha,
36 member of the Masonic Lodge, member of the Leadership Roundtable, board member

1 and executive committee member of the National Conference of Christians and
2 Jews, member of the board of First Commercial Bank of Little Rock and
3 recipient of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award presented by Arkansas
4 Cultural Enterprises, Inc.; and

5 WHEREAS, Dr. Townsend was elected to 12 terms in the Arkansas House of
6 Representatives, where he served for 24 years; and

7 WHEREAS, in 1952 he married Miss Billye Gene McNeely and they raised
8 three daughters, Yolanda, Terezenha and LaJuan, instilling in them sound moral
9 values and a willingness to work hard for the benefit of their families and
10 communities;

11 WHEREAS, Dr. Townsend has been honored with numerous awards recognizing
12 his personal and professional achievements, as well as his unceasing efforts
13 to protect civil rights and improve education and health care for all
14 citizens; and

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16 NOW THEREFORE,

17 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE
18 OF ARKANSAS:

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20 THAT the members of the Arkansas General Assembly wish to express to Dr.
21 William H. Townsend their most sincere appreciation of his contributions to
22 the State of Arkansas, their gratitude for the pleasure of working with him
23 during his years in the legislature and their respect and admiration for his
24 life's work.

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