

1 State of Arkansas
2 81st General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 1997

H.R. 1023

4 By: Representative Bennett, et al.

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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

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Subtitle

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, in his 46 years of practice he has found time for public service, contributing to the community in his duties as president of the Arkansas Council on Human Relations, a member of the local, state, and national Optometric Associations, receiving the Arkansas Optometrist of the Year Award in 1981, a lifetime member of the NAACP, board member of the Urban League, deacon and trustee of Mount Zion Baptist Church, treasurer of Professional Service, Inc., member of Pi Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, 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 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EIGHTY-FIRST GENERAL
18 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE 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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