

## Senate Resolution 109 - Introduced

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 109

BY QUIRMBACH and LOFGREN

1 A Resolution recognizing the 200th anniversary of the  
2 birth of Alexander Clark and honoring his legacy.

3 WHEREAS, Iowans proudly claim Alexander Clark as one  
4 of the state's most illustrious sons, whose endeavors  
5 helped shape the legal and moral fabric of Iowa and the  
6 nation; and

7 WHEREAS, Alexander Clark was born on February 25,  
8 1826, in Washington, Pennsylvania, and settled in  
9 Muscatine, Iowa, in 1842, where he rose from barber and  
10 entrepreneur to human rights champion, and eventually  
11 served in the highest diplomatic post available to  
12 Black Americans in the 19th century; and

13 WHEREAS, Mr. Clark was a lay leader in the African  
14 Methodist Episcopal Church, helping to found Iowa's  
15 first African Methodist Episcopal congregation in  
16 1848, serving as a delegate to numerous conferences,  
17 and representing the denomination at an ecumenical  
18 conference in London; and

19 WHEREAS, Mr. Clark emerged as a bold advocate for  
20 justice when he led efforts petitioning the delegates  
21 to the Iowa Constitutional Convention of 1857 to repeal  
22 the discriminatory "Black laws" that restricted the  
23 rights of African Americans; and

24 WHEREAS, during the Civil War, Mr. Clark served  
25 as the primary recruiter and honorary sergeant major  
26 for the First Iowa Infantry of African Descent, later  
27 designated the 60th United States Colored Troops, and  
28 donated his recruiting fees to provide uniforms and

1 supplies; and

2 WHEREAS, Mr. Clark presided over a convention in  
3 October 1865, when the 60th United States Colored  
4 Troops mustered out at Davenport, drafting a petition  
5 to the General Assembly demanding suffrage and  
6 declaring that men "trusted with the musket can and  
7 ought to be trusted with the ballot"; and

8 WHEREAS, in 1867, Mr. Clark challenged racial  
9 exclusion in education by suing the Muscatine School  
10 Board on behalf of his daughter, Susan Clark, resulting  
11 in the landmark Supreme Court ruling, *Clark v. Board of*  
12 *School Directors*, 24 Iowa 266 (1868), which integrated  
13 Iowa's public schools 86 years before the Supreme Court  
14 of the United States decision in *Brown v. Board of*  
15 *Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954); and

16 WHEREAS, Mr. Clark was prominent in the movement  
17 that successfully amended the Constitution of the State  
18 of Iowa in 1868 by striking the word "white" from  
19 Iowa's founding document and securing the right to vote  
20 for Black men; and

21 WHEREAS, Mr. Clark traveled widely as a high-ranking  
22 Grand Master of the Prince Hall Masons, gaining renown  
23 as the "Colored Orator of the West"; and

24 WHEREAS, in 1884, at the age of 58, Mr. Clark  
25 graduated from the University of Iowa College of  
26 Law, becoming the institution's second Black graduate,  
27 following his son, Alexander G. Clark; and

28 WHEREAS, Mr. Clark was the owner and editor of the  
29 *Chicago Conservator* and achieved a national reputation  
30 as a leader among Black publishers; and

1 WHEREAS, Mr. Clark concluded his career of public  
2 service as United States Minister to Liberia, having  
3 been appointed by President Benjamin Harrison; and

4 WHEREAS, the Alexander Clark House in Muscatine  
5 stands today as a historic landmark, serving as a  
6 testament to a life dedicated to the principle of human  
7 equality; NOW THEREFORE,

8 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, That the Senate  
9 recognizes February 25, 2026, as the 200th anniversary  
10 of the birth of Alexander Clark and honors his legacy  
11 as an Iowan whose example continues to inspire the  
12 pursuit of human freedom and equality.

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