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House Resolution

A resolution recognizing February 2002 as Black History Month.

WHEREAS, the history of persons of African descent in Florida and the United States of America is a rich and complex history and one that has been an integral part of our history, and

WHEREAS, the history of African Americans has been a unique and difficult proving ground for the ideals upon which this country was founded, which had its severest test during the Civil War over the abolition of the institution of slavery, and

WHEREAS, more than a century later, following the disappointment of Reconstruction, African Americans rekindled their struggle for full citizenship through the civil rights movement, the primary goal of which was the acknowledgment of those rights through the elimination by law and court order of legalized segregation and second-class citizenship, and

WHEREAS, this struggle of African Americans to secure freedom and equality of opportunity has been conducted ironically against many other Americans who originally came to this country to secure those same rights, which rights represent the promise of America, and

WHEREAS, it is important to celebrate the many achievements of African Americans in and on behalf of this country, from science and the arts to politics and religion, not only to offer African Americans an occasion to explore their particular heritage, but also to offer all Americans that broader, enriching perspective that reveals the amazing diversity of contributors to the forming and shaping of this

1 nation, a diversity that has made it a model for the world,
2 and

3 WHEREAS, the State of Florida is uniquely blessed for
4 the examination of this history, because it is the home of
5 such excellent museums as the Black Archives Research Center
6 and Museum at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University,
7 the Florida Museum of Natural History at the University of
8 Florida, and the Black Heritage Museum in Miami and is also
9 the site of such renowned research as the Black Abolitionist
10 Papers Project at Florida State University, and

11 WHEREAS, it is especially fitting to recognize the many
12 achievements of Floridians such as Zora Neale Hurston, Charles
13 Kenzie Steele, Sr., Jesse J. McCrary, Jr., Joseph E. Lee, and
14 Mary McLeod Bethune, whose devotion to equality serves as a
15 shining example to us all, and

16 WHEREAS, the month of February, the birth month of both
17 Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, key leaders in the
18 abolishment of slavery, is particularly suited for the
19 commemoration of this history and has been so observed in part
20 or in whole, at the local, state, and national levels, since
21 Dr. Carter G. Woodson, historian and founder of the Journal of
22 Negro History, initiated the observance with Negro History
23 Week in 1926, which is today known as Black History Month,
24 NOW, THEREFORE,

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26 Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
27 Florida:

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29 That the month of February 2002 is hereby recognized as
30 Black History Month for the purpose of making all citizens of

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1 the State of Florida aware of the rich and unique history and
2 contributions of African Americans.
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