

HR 8007

2023

House Resolution

A resolution recognizing February 2023 as "Black History Month" in Florida.

WHEREAS, every year, Floridians celebrate the birth month of two great Americans, Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, both of them leaders in the movement to abolish slavery, and join all Americans in recognizing February as the month to commemorate the contributions of African Americans to our society, and

WHEREAS, long ago, an estimated 12 million African men, women, and children were forcibly removed from their homelands, enslaved, and placed on ships that sailed to the Western Hemisphere, and

WHEREAS, approximately 2 million African men, women, and children died on the Middle Passage, but 10 million survived and arrived in the Americas, where they and their children lived in slavery, and

WHEREAS, the Civil War erupted because the ideals upon which this country was founded are in direct conflict with slavery, a tenet recognized by the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery in the United States of America, and

WHEREAS, the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, and, in 2023,

26 Floridians celebrated the 160th anniversary of that declaration,
 27 which made slaves in all confederate states "free forever," and

28 WHEREAS, our nation has celebrated black history during the
 29 month of February since 1926, when Carter G. Woodson established
 30 Negro History Week, and

31 WHEREAS, the Civil Rights Movement of the 20th century
 32 began in an effort to correct the failures of Reconstruction and
 33 erase the remnants of slavery still evident in Jim Crow laws, in
 34 continued segregation in nearly every aspect of daily life, and
 35 in the persistence of second-class citizenship for African
 36 Americans, and

37 WHEREAS, 60 years ago, in August 1963, the historic March
 38 on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, led by the late Reverend Dr.
 39 Martin Luther King, Jr., who delivered his now famous "I Have a
 40 Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, was a
 41 catalyst for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and

42 WHEREAS, as a testament to the strength of all African
 43 Americans throughout these struggles, we note the contributions
 44 to the political and social growth of American society of
 45 Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Booker T.
 46 Washington, George Washington Carver, Carter G. Woodson, W.E.B.
 47 DuBois, Malcolm X, Dr. King, Fannie Lou Hamer, Thurgood
 48 Marshall, Barbara Jordan, Shirley Chisholm, Dorothy Height, and
 49 President Barack Obama, and

50 WHEREAS, we honor the African Americans who are currently

51 | serving in this body and those who served before them, including
52 | those who served before and during the Reconstruction era,
53 | followed by Joe Lang Kershaw, the first African American person
54 | elected to the Florida Legislature since Reconstruction, and
55 | those who were elected soon after, such as Gwendolyn "Gwen"
56 | Sawyer Cherry, Mary L. Singleton, Arnett E. Girardeau, Carrie P.
57 | Meek, and John Thomas, and

58 | WHEREAS, the culture of the United States of America has
59 | been vitally enriched through the contributions of African-
60 | American musicians, artists, and writers, including Charlie
61 | Parker, Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Count
62 | Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, Marian Anderson, Ella Fitzgerald, James
63 | DePreist, Leontyne Price, Andre Watts, Phyllis Wheatley,
64 | Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Alex Haley,
65 | Gwendolyn Brooks, Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker,
66 | Oprah Winfrey, Denzel Washington, Angela Bassett, Hill Harper,
67 | Anika Noni Rose, Jennifer Hudson, Beyoncé Knowles, Amanda
68 | Gorman, and Viola Davis, and

69 | WHEREAS, African-American sports figures have demonstrated
70 | their ability to be rolemodels on and off the field and in and
71 | out of the ring, often standing up for their rights and beliefs,
72 | and these legendary athletes include Jesse Owens, Arthur Ashe,
73 | Lee Roy Selmon, Freddie Solomon, Muhammad Ali, Venus and Serena
74 | Williams, Trayvon Bromell, Shaquem and Shaquill Griffin, and
75 | Florida native Robert "Bullet Bob" Hayes, the first athlete to

76 | earn both an Olympic Gold Medal and an NFL Super Bowl Ring, and
 77 | WHEREAS, the fields of medicine, science, and technology
 78 | have all been advanced by the contributions of African-American
 79 | men and women, including Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, George
 80 | Washington Carver, Dr. Charles R. Drew, Garrett Morgan, and Dr.
 81 | Mae C. Jemison, and

82 | WHEREAS, Floridians, including Mary McLeod Bethune, Joseph
 83 | E. Lee, James Weldon Johnson, Harry Tyson Moore, Harriette Vyde
 84 | Simms Moore, Zora Neale Hurston, Asa Philip Randolph, Charles
 85 | Kenzie Steele, Jesse K. McCrary, Jr., and Patricia Stephens Due
 86 | have proudly represented our state as they contributed to the
 87 | history and culture of the United States of America, and

88 | WHEREAS, each year, the celebration of the many
 89 | achievements of African Americans offers all Americans a broader
 90 | perspective of the history of this nation and an appreciation
 91 | for the diversity that makes this great nation strong, NOW,
 92 | THEREFORE,

93 |
 94 | Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
 95 | Florida:

96 |
 97 | That February 2023 is recognized as "Black History Month"
 98 | in Florida.