

By Senators Rouson, Thompson, Davis, Jones, Powell, Osgood, and Simon

16-00018-23B

202310B__

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

WHEREAS, our nation has celebrated black history during the month of February since 1926, when Carter G. Woodson established

16-00018-23B

202310B__

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, particularly, the African Americans who
51 are currently serving in this body and those who served before
52 them: those who served from 1868-1887, during the Reconstruction
53 era; and 95 years later, in 1982, when Senator Carrie P. Meek
54 and Senator Arnett E. Girardeau became the first two post-
55 Reconstruction African Americans elected, serving with
56 distinction for 10 years when, in 1992, James T. Hargrett, Jr.,
57 Betty S. Holzendorf, Daryl L. Jones, Matthew Meadows, and
58 William H. Turner were also elected, and

16-00018-23B

202310B__

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

70 WHEREAS, African-American sports figures have demonstrated
71 their ability to be role models on and off the field and in and
72 out of the ring as they stood up for their rights and beliefs,
73 and these legendary athletes include Jesse Owens, Arthur Ashe,
74 Lee Roy Selmon, Freddie Solomon, Muhammad Ali, Venus and Serena
75 Williams, Trayvon Bromell, Shaquem and Shaquill Griffin, and
76 Florida native Robert "Bullet Bob" Hayes, the first athlete to
77 earn both an Olympic Gold Medal and an NFL Super Bowl Ring, and

78 WHEREAS, the fields of medicine, science, and technology
79 have all been advanced by the contributions of African-American
80 men and women, including Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, George
81 Washington Carver, Dr. Charles R. Drew, Garrett Morgan, and Dr.
82 Mae C. Jemison, and

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

16-00018-23B

202310B__

88 contributed to the history and culture of the United States of
89 America, and

90 WHEREAS, each year, it is important to celebrate the many
91 achievements of African Americans in an effort to offer each
92 American a broader perspective of the history of this nation and
93 an appreciation for the diversity that makes this great nation
94 strong, NOW, THEREFORE,

95

96 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

97

98 That February 2023 is recognized as "Black History Month"
99 in Florida.