

By Senator Rouson

16-02885B-24

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Senate Resolution

A resolution recognizing February 2024 as "Black History Month" in Florida.

WHEREAS, every year, Floridians join with all Americans in recognizing February as the month to commemorate the contributions of African Americans to our society and to celebrate the birth month of two great Americans, Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, both of whom were leaders in the movement to abolish slavery, 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 of those 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, because slavery and the ideals upon which this country was founded were in direct conflict, the Civil War erupted and lasted 4 years, ultimately leading to hard-won change and the abolishment of slavery in the United States of America, which was recognized through the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution, and

WHEREAS, the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, and, in 2024, Floridians celebrated the 161st anniversary of that declaration, which made enslaved people in all confederate states "free forever," and

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

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

39 WHEREAS, nearly 61 years ago, in August 1963, the historic
40 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, led by the late
41 Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who delivered his now
42 famous "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln
43 Memorial, was a catalyst for the passage of the Civil Rights Act
44 of 1964, and

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

53 WHEREAS, we honor, particularly, the African Americans who
54 are currently serving in this body and those who served before
55 them: those who served from 1868-1887, during the Reconstruction
56 era; and 95 years later, in 1982, when Senator Carrie P. Meek
57 and Senator Arnett E. Girardeau became the first two post-
58 Reconstruction African Americans elected, serving with

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59 distinction for 10 years when, in 1992, James T. Hargrett, Jr.,
60 Betty S. Holzendorf, Daryl L. Jones, Matthew Meadows, and
61 William H. Turner were also elected, and

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

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

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

87 WHEREAS, native Floridians, including Mary McLeod Bethune,

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88 Joseph E. Lee, James Weldon Johnson, Harry Tyson Moore,
89 Harriette Vyda Simms Moore, Zora Neale Hurston, Asa Philip
90 Randolph, Charles Kenzie Steele, Jesse K. McCrary, Jr., and
91 Patricia Stephens Due have proudly represented our state as they
92 contributed to the history and culture of the United States of
93 America, and

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

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

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102 That February 2024 is recognized as "Black History Month"
103 in Florida.