

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 97-4624, by Representatives Conway, Mason, Radcliff, Kenney, Tokuda, Murray, Cody, Veloria, Chopp, D. Schmidt and B. Thomas

WHEREAS, Each year February marks the national observance of Black History Month to celebrate the significant contributions of Americans of African ancestry to the history of our great nation; and

WHEREAS, Americans of African ancestry came to these shores in the early 1500's with early explorers and trade expeditions and later in human bondage and have remained on the soil of the Americas for more than four hundred years helping to build and protect the integrity of our economy; and

WHEREAS, For more than three hundred years as part of an established system of slavery and human bondage, they toiled and survived and then overcame the degradation and shame of this system to become contributors at every level of our public and private enterprises; and

WHEREAS, The ancestors of the very first Africans to arrive on the shores of America have been scattered throughout the United States, and many of them reside in our State of Washington; and

WHEREAS, Many organizations and individuals are a testimony to the ongoing contributions made by Americans of African ancestry and this is exemplified in their presence in communities throughout Washington; and

WHEREAS, Blacks in Government represents the thousands of residents proud to work for their cities, counties, state, and the federal government which they see as an honorable way to serve their country; and

WHEREAS, The Black Professional Engineers provide outreach to students through mentoring, training, and support for innovation and intellectual development in the field of engineering; and

WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Airman continue to support the education and training of airplane pilots through scholarships and exposure to the historic establishment of this all black air corps, an entity which continued the presence of African Americans who bravely served throughout this nation's history, including during the Revolutionary War at which the first soldier to shed blood was an African American; and

WHEREAS, First Fridays of Washington brings together accomplished professionals, labor unionists, and entrepreneurs at the Mecca International to continue the African culture of spiritual healing, intergenerational dialogue, and organizing to provide enrichment and opportunities for the emerging leaders of this state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Washington's Tracy Hall, Esther "Little Dove" John, Jourdan Keith, Danae Jones, Lauri Conner, Bernard Harris, Felicia Loud, Chukundi Salisbury, James "Boogie" Stewart, Crystal Allen, Salah Mason, Mansa Musa, Neb-Ra Musa, Debrena Jackson Gandy, Bernard C. Bennett, Veronica Williams, Angelyn C. Frazer, Dian E. Ferguson, Baruti, and Reverend Cecilia Johnson are examples of Washington's young black artists, business owners, educators, and public servants who are descendants of early Americans; and

WHEREAS, The Washington State Legislature has had among its elected African-American Representatives and Senators, representing both the Democratic and Republican parties, George Washington Bush, Sam Smith, Charles Stokes, Marjorie Pitter-King, Michael Ross, Peggie Joan Maxie, George Fleming, Bill Smitherman, Jesse Wineberry, Rosa Franklin, Vivian Caver, and Dawn Mason. Other African-American elected officials currently serving include Seattle Mayor Norm Rice, King County Executive Ron Sims, Seattle City Councilman Richard McIver, and Yakima City Councilman Henry Beauchamp; and

WHEREAS, Washington is a great state and America is a great nation because of our recognition of the contributions made by many diverse ethnic populations and because of our ability to work together and grow together as a state dependent upon international peace, harmony, and trade;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the great contributions of African Americans to our past and present by commemorating Black History Month 1997.

I hereby certify this to be a true and correct copy of
Resolution 4624 adopted by the House of Representatives
February 17, 1997.

Timothy A. Martin, Chief Clerk