HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 2019-4614, by Representative Morgan

WHEREAS, This celebration of history got its start in 1925, as an idea of historian Carter G. Woodson to raise awareness of the history and contribution of black Americans in the hopes that reason would overcome prejudice; and

WHEREAS, Woodson's week of history was first observed in 1926 during a week of February that included the birthdays of two great men; and

WHEREAS, The first man was Frederick Douglass, who chose to celebrate his birthday on February 14th because he was born a slave on a plantation in Maryland, and was of mixed race, including Native American and African on his mother's side and European on his father's side, and escaped slavery in 1838 to become a skilled preacher, thinker, and author; and

WHEREAS, The second man was born on February 12th and is Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States and the man who issued the Emancipation Proclamation, ending slavery; and

WHEREAS, The two men met in the summer of 1863 in the White House, and discussed ways to treat black soldiers fighting on the Union side as equals to white soldiers; and

WHEREAS, There was a great response to Woodson's idea, with black history clubs created throughout the nation and teachers asking for material for use in their classrooms; and

WHEREAS, By the time Woodson died in 1950, this week of history had become well-established, and the civil rights movement of the 1960s only strengthened the effort to explore the contributions of black Americans; and

WHEREAS, In the bicentennial year of 1976, fifty years after Woodson gave birth to the idea, President Gerald Ford expanded the week to the month of February, urging all Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history"; and

WHEREAS, The list of accomplishments and contributions is long and includes the writings of Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Ralph Ellison, and Toni Morrison; and

WHEREAS, Scientific achievements include the inventions of George Washington Carver and the three NASA workers—Katherine Goble, Mary Jackson, and Dorothy Vaughan—whose calculations helped put astronauts on the moon; and

WHEREAS, Black soldiers helped unite the military and the nation, from Crispus Attucks, the first casualty of the Revolutionary War, to ex-slaves fighting in the Civil War to Benjamin Davis, Jr., commander of the Tuskegee Airmen and the first black general of the United States Air Force; and

WHEREAS, Warriors for justice and equality include Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Thurgood Marshall, Rosa Parks, and Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, We also recognize the vision of inspiring political leaders such as Congressman John Lewis, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm—the first black woman elected to Congress and the first black woman to run for president—and America's first black president, Barack Obama;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives celebrate Black History Month and recognize the legacy and contributions of black Americans.