

SENATE RESOLUTION
8626

By Senators Swecker, Franklin, Sheldon, B., Zarelli, Hale, Johnson, Fraser, Winsley, Rasmussen and Costa

WHEREAS, February is designated as Black History Month; and

WHEREAS, African Americans are an integral part of Washington's diverse population and rich history, being among the first non-Native Americans to settle in the area which was to become the Washington Territory and ultimately the state of Washington; and

WHEREAS, George W. Bush, an African American, founded one of the first permanent non-Native American settlements in Washington; and

WHEREAS, George W. Bush and his wife, Isabel, decided to leave Missouri to search for new land in the Northwest and a better life, and to escape the racism pervasive at that time in his home state; and

WHEREAS, George W. Bush, Isabel, their children, and other families made up a settlement party that set off along the Oregon Trail in 1844, intending to settle in the Oregon Territory; and

WHEREAS, George W. Bush and Isabel cared for other children orphaned along the Oregon Trail during their arduous journey, and George W. Bush was held in such high regard by the other members of the settlement party that he, along with Michael Troutman Simmons, co-led that settlement party; and

WHEREAS, upon reaching The Dalles, an advance party learned that a group in the Oregon Territory had enacted a "Black Exclusion Law," under which African Americans were excluded from Oregon under pain of whipping; and

WHEREAS, George W. Bush decided to take his family north of the Columbia River and finally settled in the southern Puget Sound region, a year and a half after first setting out, in what was then a portion of North America under British control; and

WHEREAS, the settlers led by George W. Bush settled in an area of the southern Puget Sound which would become commonly known as Bush Prairie, where, along with help from Native American peoples in the area, they were able to live as farmers, traders, hunters, and gatherers of seafood from the Puget Sound; and

WHEREAS, George W. Bush had a reputation for generosity and could be relied upon by others to share food and seed grain, asking only if they were unable to pay that they would pass along similar aid to others in need; and

WHEREAS, that settlement led by George W. Bush played a role in establishing an American presence in what was then British-controlled North America, leading to further settlement of Washington and eventually becoming the Forty-Second State of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, George W. Bush's son, William Owen Bush, was a member of the first state Constitutional Convention, and was later elected to the first State Legislature, where he introduced the bill that established the institution now known as Washington State University in 1890; and

WHEREAS, the Bush family is honored throughout the state as one of our earliest pioneer families, and this state owes a debt of gratitude to the efforts of George W. Bush, his family, and those he led for having the courage to seek a new life and settle in our state;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Washington State Senate hereby recognizes and honors one of our founding settlers, George W. Bush, in honor of his contribution to our state, and deems it all the more appropriate to honor this great man during this month of February, Black History Month, 2001; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Washington State History Museum, the University of Washington, Washington State University, Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, Western Washington University, The Evergreen State College and the Lewis County Historical Society.

I, Tony M. Cook, Secretary of the Senate,
do hereby certify that this is a true and
correct copy of Senate Resolution 8626,
adopted by the Senate February 28, 2001.

TONY M. COOK
Secretary of the Senate