

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 2024-4667, by Representative Donaghy

1 WHEREAS, Black History Month is celebrated in Washington state
2 and around the nation due to the efforts of Dr. Carter Woodson, who
3 in 1926 advocated that we set aside a special period in February to
4 recognize the history, heritage, and achievements of black people in
5 the United States; and

6 WHEREAS, Dr. Woodson chose February to celebrate black history to
7 honor the birth month of the abolitionist Frederick Douglass and
8 President Abraham Lincoln, who signed the Emancipation Proclamation;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, By the time Woodson died in 1950, this week of history
11 had become well established, and the civil rights movement of the
12 1960s only strengthened the effort to explore the contributions of
13 African Americans; and

14 WHEREAS, In the bicentennial year of 1976, 50 years after Woodson
15 gave birth to the idea, President Gerald Ford expanded the week to
16 the month of February, urging all Americans to "seize the opportunity
17 to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans
18 in every area of endeavor throughout our history"; and

19 WHEREAS, Much of the history of black Americans can be viewed
20 through the lens of the long, hard struggle to reconcile the reality
21 of slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation with the words and ideals
22 written in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights;
23 and

1 WHEREAS, Even today, almost 160 years after the last black slaves
2 in America were emancipated, black Americans continue to struggle
3 under the shadow of discrimination and injustice institutionalized in
4 the past; and

5 WHEREAS, The Black History Month 2024 theme, "African Americans
6 and the Arts," embraces the many impacts that black Americans have
7 had on visual arts, music, cultural movements, and more; and

8 WHEREAS, Across centuries, black voices have risen in song across
9 the hills, fields, and plains in music, and black fingers have picked
10 out the melodies, harmonies, and rhythms of life stories, the forced
11 assimilation of gospel, to the blues, jazz, rock, rap, and soul of
12 today; and

13 WHEREAS, Tangible expressions of history, family, hope, love,
14 fear, pain, and dreams have been brought to life at the hands of
15 black Americans in as many mediums as can be imagined; and

16 WHEREAS, Tales of tribulations and triumphs, love and loss, wild
17 adventures, and moments of quiet reflection have been sketched and
18 stamped across the pages of our nation's history; and

19 WHEREAS, Black Americans have stood up, spoken out and danced
20 across grass, pavement, floors, stages, and screens, weaving vivid
21 tales of joy, heartbreak, humor, and everything in between, shared
22 raw, in shades of grey, or in full color; and

23 WHEREAS, Black artists of all kinds continue to leave a poignant,
24 indelible impression on our souls, culture, and the world around us,
25 regardless of expressive form; and

26 WHEREAS, Black history is American history. Black culture is
27 American culture; and

28 WHEREAS, This Black History Month, and every month, is a time to
29 learn about those who came before us, and keep pushing towards a
30 brighter, more just future;

31 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives
32 celebrate Black History Month and recognize the legacy and
33 innumerable contributions of black Americans to the lives of
34 Washingtonians, not only in February but throughout the whole year;
35 and

36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives honor
37 and thank all the black individuals who participated in the shaping
38 of the United States, as well as all black and African American
39 active duty military personnel and veterans and others who serve, and
40 we encourage the celebration of Black History Month in our schools,

1 universities, communities, and neighborhoods, to foster a better
2 understanding of that history and its importance here in Washington
3 and throughout this nation.

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