

Reps. Clack, Cushingberry, Hammel, Hammon, Johnson, Melton, Constan, Vagnozzi, Miller, Angerer, Meisner, Simpson, Alma Smith, Shaffer, Scott, Ball, Gonzales, Bauer, Condino, Coulouris, Rick Jones, Warren, Palsrok, Polidori, Leland, Robert Jones, Young, Donigan, Brown, Lindberg, Lahti, Ebli, Lemmons, Sak, Wojno, Dean, Byrnes, Byrum, Espinoza, Nofs, Brandenburg, Huizenga, Hune, Hildenbrand and Gaffney offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 13. 13.

A resolution commemorating February 2007 as Black History Month in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, The origins of an annual Black history celebration, began in 1900 when Mary Church Terrell would honor Frederick Douglas' birthday, which is February 14, in Washington, DC. In 1926, Carter G. Woodson, who witnessed this annual celebration, chose the second week of February for Black History Week. This week marks the birthdays of two men who had a profound impact on Black Americans, Frederick Douglas and Abraham Lincoln. Now more than 50 years later, Black History Week has evolved into Black History Month, which is to celebrate and acknowledge the achievements of Black Americans; and

Whereas, History books had barely started covering Black history when the tradition of Black History Month was started. At that point, most representation of Blacks in history books was only in reference to the low social position they held, with the exception of George Washington Carver; and

Whereas, Part of the aim of Black History Month is to expose the harms of racial prejudice and to cultivate Black self-esteem following centuries of socio-economic oppression. It is also an opportunity to recognize significant contributions to society made by people with African heritage; and

Whereas, Black History Month sparks an annual debate about the continued relevance of a designated month dedicated to the history of one race. Woodson, creator of the Black History Week, hoped that the week would eventually be eliminated when Black history would be fully integrated with American history. His dream has yet to be realized; and

Whereas, Black history acknowledges the impact Black Americans have had on American society. Black Americans have played a significant role in the United States since the first Africans arrived in Jamestown, Virginia in August 1619. Black Americans have made many contributions from agriculture to the arts which includes many inventions as the traffic light, disposable syringe, and the microphone, among many others; and

Whereas, A national month dedicated to educating all Americans on the achievements and contributions of Black Americans has afforded everyone the opportunity to learn a segment of American history that has been marginalized. Until the day that history books honestly integrate Black history with American history, we should continue to celebrate Black History Month; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body commemorate February 2007 as Black History Month, and honor the contributions it is making to educate Americans on the achievements of Black Americans; and be it further

Resolved, We honor and join other organizations throughout the state and this country, as they use this occasion to honor the contribution of Black Americans; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to local civil rights organizations and Black History Museums throughout the state of Michigan.

