

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 37

Reps. Fink, Beson, Martin, Tisdell, Schuette, Alexander, BeGole, Bezotte and Greene offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to declare February 14, 2023, as Frederick
2 Douglass Day in the state of Michigan.

3 Whereas, Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in February
4 1818 in the state of Maryland. He never knew the exact date of his
5 own birth but adopted Valentine's Day as his birthday after his
6 mother Harriet Bailey called him her "Little Valentine"; and

7 Whereas, Mr. Douglass escaped from bondage at the age of 20,
8 whereupon he began a life dedicated to the abolition of slavery in
9 the United States and the recognition of Black Americans as free
10 and equal citizens; and

11 Whereas, Frederick Douglass worked throughout his childhood to
12 learn to read and write, even against the wishes of the family

1 which claimed to own him, and shortly after his escape from slavery
2 became a famed and persuasive orator, detailing to Northern
3 audiences the horrors of life in the South for slaves and arguing
4 for the fundamental equality of all Americans; and

5 Whereas, Mr. Douglass made several visits to Michigan, where
6 he met with other proponents of abolition across the state,
7 including in Detroit, Hillsdale, and Ypsilanti, and gave speeches
8 on civil rights; and

9 Whereas, In freedom, Frederick Douglass married Anna Murray
10 and raised five children, and following Anna's death married Helen
11 Pitts; and

12 Whereas, During the Civil War, Frederick Douglass recruited
13 the first Black military unit in United States history, the 54th
14 Massachusetts Infantry, which included his sons Charles and Lewis;
15 and

16 Whereas, Mr. Douglass knew and advised many prominent American
17 statesmen and citizens of his day, including Ida B. Wells, Susan B.
18 Anthony, Charles Remond, William Lloyd Garrison, and John Marshall
19 Harlan, as well as Abraham Lincoln and every President of the
20 United States who served after Lincoln until Douglass' death in
21 1888; and

22 Whereas, Mr. Douglass served the United States as U.S. Marshal
23 for the District of Columbia, Recorder of Deeds for the District of
24 Columbia, and as Minister to Haiti; and

25 Whereas, To this day, Frederick Douglass' autobiographies and
26 speeches serve as powerful testimonies to the motto of Douglass'
27 newspaper the North Star, which asserts "Right is of no sex—Truth
28 is of no Color—God is the Father of us all, and we are all
29 Brethren"; and

1 Whereas, February 14, 2023, will be recognized as the 205th
2 anniversary of Frederick Douglass' birth; now, therefore, be it

3 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of
4 this legislative body declare February 14, 2023, as Frederick
5 Douglass Day in the state of Michigan.