

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO.2003-4628, by Representatives Pettigrew, Hudgins, Flannigan, Chopp, McCoy, Kenney, Lovick, Chase, Upthegrove, Veloria, Hunter, Eickmeyer, Moeller, Fromhold, Clibborn, Dickerson, Delvin, Hunt and Conway

WHEREAS, Black History Month was established in February 1926 by Carter G. Woodson as Negro History Week and was later expanded to Afro-American History Month in 1976 in honor of the nation's bicentennial, with the hope that through this special observance all Americans would be reminded of their ethnic roots and develop a mutual respect for the contributions of all racial groups in America; and

WHEREAS, For nearly 400 years as part of an established system of slavery and human bondage, Black Americans toiled and survived and then overcame the degradation and shame of this system to become contributors at every level of our public and private endeavors; and

WHEREAS, The desire to succeed and contribute to America caused Black Americans to defy racial hostility, Jim Crow Laws, and economic and social injustices; and

WHEREAS, Black History Month should be the reaffirmation of struggle and determination to change attitudes and heighten the understanding of the African experience; and

WHEREAS, The observance must be a testimony to those African pioneers who struggle to affirm the humanity of African Peoples and a challenge to the present generation to protect and preserve the humanity of all peoples of African descent; and

WHEREAS, The month of February is significant and recognized in African-American History for the birthdays of great African-American pioneers and institutions, such as Frederick Douglass, W. E.B. DeBois, Langston Hughes, Eubie Blake, the NAACP, and the first Pan African Congress; and

WHEREAS, George Washington Bush was the first Black American to serve in the Washington Territorial Legislature; Representatives Charles Stokes and Marjorie Pitter King were the first Black American man and woman to serve in the legislature following the proclamation of Washington statehood; and Charles Z. Smith was the first Black American to serve on the Washington State Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, The Washington State Legislature is honored to have among its former members the following elected Black American Representatives and Senators: Sam Smith, Michael Ross, Peggie Joan Maxie, George Fleming, Bill Smitherman, Jesse Wineberry, Vivian Caver, and Dawn Mason; and

WHEREAS, Black Americans have made significant contributions to Washington State history in several fields, including: Civil rights leader Edwin T. Pratt; poet Mona Lake Jones; artists Jacob Lawrence and James Washington; historian Esther Mumford; and musicians Quincy Jones, Ernestine Anderson, and Jimi Hendrix; and

WHEREAS, George Washington Bush, one of the Pacific Northwest's most successful pioneers, founded the city of Centerville, now known as Centralia, and single-handedly saved the city from bankruptcy and starvation during the closing of iron works and local lumber mills, by providing food for the local citizens and making "interest free" loans to residents of the community; and

WHEREAS, George Washington Bush headed to the Northwest seeking a place free of prejudice with his wife and family, homesteaded a 640-acre parcel that later became Bush Prairie, now known as Tumwater; and

WHEREAS, As demonstrated by some of our contemporary writers and educators--including Toni Morrison, Henry Louis Gates Jr., Shelby Steele, Cornel West, bell hooks and others--that the African-American intellectual tradition belongs at the center of American history;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State House of Representatives recognize February 2003 as Black History Month, in recognition of Americans of African descent who have contributed to America; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the members of the Washington State House of Representatives do hereby recognize and appreciate the many benefits of Black History Month to our

citizenry and to our culture in general and that we urge all citizens of the State of Washington to join with us in taking the opportunity this month to explore this rich history and expand our world view; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives to the Chair of the Washington State Commission on African-American Affairs.

I hereby certify this to be a true and correct copy of
Resolution 4628 adopted by the House of Representatives
February 21, 2003

Cynthia Zehnder, Chief Clerk