

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 2019-4614, by Representative Morgan

1 WHEREAS, This celebration of history got its start in 1925, as an
2 idea of historian Carter G. Woodson to raise awareness of the history
3 and contribution of black Americans in the hopes that reason would
4 overcome prejudice; and

5 WHEREAS, Woodson's week of history was first observed in 1926
6 during a week of February that included the birthdays of two great
7 men; and

8 WHEREAS, The first man was Frederick Douglass, who chose to
9 celebrate his birthday on February 14th because he was born a slave
10 on a plantation in Maryland, and was of mixed race, including Native
11 American and African on his mother's side and European on his
12 father's side, and escaped slavery in 1838 to become a skilled
13 preacher, thinker, and author; and

14 WHEREAS, The second man was born on February 12th and is Abraham
15 Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States and the man who
16 issued the Emancipation Proclamation, ending slavery; and

17 WHEREAS, The two men met in the summer of 1863 in the White
18 House, and discussed ways to treat black soldiers fighting on the
19 Union side as equals to white soldiers; and

20 WHEREAS, There was a great response to Woodson's idea, with black
21 history clubs created throughout the nation and teachers asking for
22 material for use in their classrooms; and

1 WHEREAS, By the time Woodson died in 1950, this week of history
2 had become well-established, and the civil rights movement of the
3 1960s only strengthened the effort to explore the contributions of
4 black Americans; and

5 WHEREAS, In the bicentennial year of 1976, fifty years after
6 Woodson gave birth to the idea, President Gerald Ford expanded the
7 week to the month of February, urging all Americans to "seize the
8 opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black
9 Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history"; and

10 WHEREAS, The list of accomplishments and contributions is long
11 and includes the writings of Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Ralph
12 Ellison, and Toni Morrison; and

13 WHEREAS, Scientific achievements include the inventions of George
14 Washington Carver and the three NASA workers—Katherine Goble, Mary
15 Jackson, and Dorothy Vaughan—whose calculations helped put astronauts
16 on the moon; and

17 WHEREAS, Black soldiers helped unite the military and the nation,
18 from Crispus Attucks, the first casualty of the Revolutionary War, to
19 ex-slaves fighting in the Civil War to Benjamin Davis, Jr., commander
20 of the Tuskegee Airmen and the first black general of the United
21 States Air Force; and

22 WHEREAS, Warriors for justice and equality include Sojourner
23 Truth, Harriet Tubman, Thurgood Marshall, Rosa Parks, and Martin
24 Luther King, Jr.; and

25 WHEREAS, We also recognize the vision of inspiring political
26 leaders such as Congressman John Lewis, Congresswoman Shirley
27 Chisholm—the first black woman elected to Congress and the first
28 black woman to run for president—and America's first black president,
29 Barack Obama;

30 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives
31 celebrate Black History Month and recognize the legacy and
32 contributions of black Americans.

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