

109TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. RES. 380

Celebrating Black History Month.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 16, 2006

Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. COLEMAN, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. COBURN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. REID, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. TALENT, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. OBAMA, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KOHL, and Mr. FRIST) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Celebrating Black History Month.

Whereas the first African Americans were brought forcibly to the shores of America as early as the 17th century;

Whereas African Americans were enslaved in the United States and subsequently faced the injustices of lynch mobs, segregation, and denial of basic, fundamental rights;

Whereas in spite of these injustices, African Americans have made significant contributions to the economic, edu-

cational, political, artistic, literary, scientific, and technological advancements of the United States;

Whereas in the face of these injustices, United States citizens of all races distinguished themselves in their commitment to the ideals on which the United States was founded, and fought for the rights of African Americans;

Whereas the greatness of the United States is reflected in the contributions of African Americans in all walks of life throughout the history of the United States, including through—

(1) the writings of Booker T. Washington, James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, and Alex Haley;

(2) the music of Mahalia Jackson, Billie Holiday, and Duke Ellington;

(3) the resolve of athletes such as Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens, and Muhammed Ali;

(4) the vision of leaders such as Frederick Douglass, Thurgood Marshall, and Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

(5) the bravery of those who stood on the front lines in the battle against oppression, such as Sojourner Truth and Rosa Parks;

Whereas the United States of America was conceived, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, as a new country dedicated to the proposition that “all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness”;

Whereas United States citizens of all races demonstrate their commitment to that proposition through actions such as those of—

(1) Allan Pinkerton, Thomas Garrett, and the Rev. John Rankin, who served as conductors in the Underground Railroad;

(2) Harriet Beecher Stowe, who shined a light on the injustices of slavery;

(3) President Abraham Lincoln, who issued the Emancipation Proclamation, and Senator Lyman Trumbull, who introduced the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

(4) President Lyndon B. Johnson, Chief Justice Earl Warren, Senator Mike Mansfield, and Senator Hubert Humphrey, who fought to end segregation and the denial of civil rights to African Americans; and

(5) Americans of all races who marched side-by-side with African Americans during the civil rights movement;

Whereas, since its founding, the United States has been an imperfect work in making progress towards those noble goals;

Whereas the history of the United States is the story of a people regularly affirming high ideals, striving to reach them but often failing, and then struggling to come to terms with the disappointment of that failure before recommitting themselves to trying again;

Whereas, from the beginning of our Nation, the most conspicuous and persistent failure of United States citizens to reach those noble goals has been the enslavement of African Americans and the resulting racism;

Whereas the crime of lynching succeeded slavery as the ultimate expression of racism in the United States following Reconstruction;

Whereas the Federal Government failed to put an end to slavery until the ratification of the 13th Amendment in 1865, repeatedly failed to enact a Federal anti-lynching law, and still struggles to deal with the evils of racism; and

Whereas the fact that 61 percent of African American 4th graders read at a below basic level and only 16 percent of native born African Americans have earned a Bachelor's degree, 50 percent of all new HIV cases are reported in African Americans, and the leading cause of death for African American males ages 15 to 34 is homicide, demonstrates that the United States continues to struggle to reach the high ideal of equal opportunity for all citizens of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) acknowledges the tragedies of slavery,
3 lynching, and segregation, and condemns them as an
4 infringement on human liberty and equal oppor-
5 tunity so that they will stand forever as a reminder
6 of what can happen when the citizens of the United
7 States fail to live up to their noble goals;

8 (2) honors those United States citizens who—

9 (A) risked their lives during the time of
10 slavery, lynching, and segregation in the Under-
11 ground Railroad and in other efforts to assist
12 fugitive slaves and other African Americans
13 who might have been targets and victims of
14 lynch mobs; and

1 (B) those who have stood beside African
2 Americans in the fight for equal opportunity
3 that continues to this day;

4 (3) reaffirms its commitment to the founding
5 principles of the United States of America that “all
6 Men are created equal, that they are endowed by
7 their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that
8 among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of
9 Happiness”;

10 (4) commits itself to addressing those situations
11 in which the African American community struggles
12 with disparities in education, health care, and other
13 areas where the Federal Government can help im-
14 prove conditions for all citizens of the United States;
15 and

16 (5) calls on the citizens of the United States to
17 observe Black History Month with appropriate pro-
18 grams, ceremonies, and activities.

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