

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 181

Recognizing and celebrating the significance of Black History Month.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 3, 2025

Mr. GREEN of Texas (for himself, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. AMO, Ms. ANSARI, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BISHOP, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. BROWN, Ms. BROWNLEY, Ms. BYNUM, Mr. CARSON, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. CASE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. COHEN, Mr. COSTA, Ms. CROCKETT, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Mr. DELUZIO, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. ELFRETH, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Mr. FIELDS, Mr. FIGURES, Mrs. FLETCHER, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GARCIA of California, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HOYER, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KENNEDY of New York, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. LANDSMAN, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Mr. LICCARDO, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. MCCLELLAN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. MCIVER, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MENG, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. NEAL, Ms. NORTON, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Ms. OMAR, Ms. PRESSLEY, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Ms. SALINAS, Ms. SCANLON, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. SOTO, Ms. STRICKLAND, Mr. THANEDAR, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. TITUS, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. TONKO, Mr. TORRES of New York, Mrs. TRAHAN, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WATERS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Ms. WILSON of Florida) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

RESOLUTION

Recognizing and celebrating the significance of Black History Month.

Whereas this resolution may be cited as the “Original Black History Month Resolution of 2025”;

Whereas this resolution has been endorsed by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History;

Whereas the theme for Black History Month 2025 is “African Americans and Labor” which focuses on the various ways that Black labor has been foundational to the United States becoming the richest country in the world;

Whereas the labor of African-American/Black people has been transformational throughout the United States;

Whereas this resolution highlights African-American/Black people’s labor from slavery through segregation into contemporary times;

Whereas enslaved Africans were first brought to the American colonies to serve as a perpetual free labor workforce upon which the colonies and eventually the United States would be built;

Whereas, during enslavement, African people were the agricultural labor force that planted the seeds, harvested the crops, and fed the colonies while enduring a crime against humanity;

Whereas this crime against humanity consisted of nearly 250 years of uncompensated labor;

Whereas the labor of the enslaved has been valued at roughly \$5,900,000,000,000 in 2016 dollars;

Whereas more than 10,000,000 African slave laborers’ lives were sacrificed to make America great;

Whereas, although the General Order No. 15 promise of 40 acres and a mule never materialized after the Civil War and emancipation, some Black people became landowners,

farmers, and sharecroppers, and continued contributing to the country's agricultural industry;

Whereas, as the United States economy transitioned into an industrial-based economy, many Black people migrated to wage-earning jobs;

Whereas convict leasing, or slavery by another name, continued to exploit the labor of the (often unjustly) incarcerated, the majority of whom were Black people, by leasing convict labor to private companies;

Whereas, during the early Reconstruction period, 214 delegates attended the Colored National Labor Union convention in December 1869 because White trade unions excluded Black workers;

Whereas Mary McLeod Bethune started a school for Black girls in Florida in 1904, eventually being elected the first woman president of the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools, which would eventually become the American Teachers Association;

Whereas Bethune would go on to be appointed director of African American Affairs by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and founded the National Council of Negro Women;

Whereas, during the Great Migration of 1916 to 1930, over 1,000,000 Black people moved from the South to the North, taking advantage of the labor shortage created in the wake of World War I;

Whereas, in 1921, Nannie Helen Burroughs established the National Trade School for Women and Girls, which sought to improve working conditions and expand career pathways for Black women;

Whereas A. Philip Randolph was a labor organizer and civil rights activist who helped create the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids in 1925, the first Black union to receive a charter in the American Federation of Labor;

Whereas the growing need for workers and soldiers during World War II led to the economic advancement of Black people, including the abolishment of racial pay differentials and the integration of the Armed Forces;

Whereas, during the civil rights movement, Black activists labored to organize a variety of movements, most notably the Montgomery bus boycotts in 1955 and the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963, where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., gave his “I Have a Dream” speech;

Whereas A. Philip Randolph was the lead organizer of the March on Washington in 1963, which brought more than 200,000 persons to Washington, DC, in support of civil rights for Black people in America;

Whereas Anna Arnold Hedgeman, a Black activist, educator, writer, and the only woman on the March’s administrative committee, persuaded organizers to include economic and women’s issues in the day’s program;

Whereas, in 1965, Randolph and fellow March organizer Bayard Rustin founded the A. Philip Randolph Institute (the African-American constituency group of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL–CIO)), and they coled the institute until Randolph’s death in 1979;

Whereas Reverend Addie Wyatt, a Black woman who became the international vice president of the United Food and

Commercial Workers in 1976, advocated for women and minority workers within her labor union;

Whereas labor also includes the work of local activists to build relationships within their community, such as within churches, social clubs, and other organizations;

Whereas Melnea Cass, also known as the “First Lady of Roxbury”, was an activist who helped workers in the Boston community by providing labor rights education, professional training, and social services, including a program to provide childcare for working mothers;

Whereas, in 1990, Hattie Canty became the first Black woman elected as the president of the Culinary Workers Union (CWU), during which time she founded the Culinary Training Academy to give people of color more opportunities within the hospitality industry;

Whereas Chris Smalls is the founder and president of the Amazon Labor Union (ALU), who successfully unionized an Amazon warehouse in Staten Island, the first Amazon union in United States history;

Whereas, today, the legacy of Black labor is still beset with racial and gender economic disparities, which can be seen in the wage gap as well as unemployment rates;

Whereas, according to a 2023 Pew Research Center study, the median Black worker makes \$878 weekly compared to \$1,059 for all other United States workers;

Whereas, similarly, as of January 2025, Black men have a 6.3-percent unemployment rate compared to approximately 3 percent for White men and women;

Whereas the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass inspired the creation of Negro History Week, the precursor to Black History Month; and

Whereas the month of February is officially celebrated as Black History Month, which dates to 1926 when Dr. Carter G. Woodson set aside the second week in February as Negro History Week to recognize the heritage and achievement of Black Americans: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

3 This resolution may be cited as the “Original Black
4 History Month Resolution of 2025”.

5 **SEC. 2. SUPPORTING BLACK HISTORY MONTH.**

6 The House of Representatives recognizes the impor-
7 tance of commemorating Black History Month as it ac-
8 knowledges the achievements of Black Americans through-
9 out the Nation’s history and encourages the continuation
10 of its celebration to raise the awareness of this commu-
11 nity’s accomplishments for all Americans.

