

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 31

Celebrating Black History Month.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 13, 2013

Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. COONS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. MANCHIN, Mrs. HAGAN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. NELSON, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. PRYOR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. COWAN, and Mr. REED) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Celebrating Black History Month.

Whereas, in 1776, the United States of America was imagined, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, as a new nation dedicated to the proposition that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”;

Whereas, on November 19, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln, in reference to the Declaration of Independence, stated, “Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, con-

ceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”;

Whereas the history of the United States includes injustices and the denial of basic, fundamental rights at odds with the words of the founders of the United States and the sacrifices commemorated at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania;

Whereas the injustices committed in the United States include approximately 250 years of slavery, 100 years of lynchings, denial of both fundamental human and civil rights, and withholding of the basic rights of citizenship;

Whereas inequalities and injustices in our society still exist today;

Whereas Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, W.E.B. Dubois, Booker T. Washington, Charles Hamilton Houston, the Tuskegee Airmen, Lena Horne, Ralph Bunche, Jackie Robinson, Constance Baker Motley, James Baldwin, Dorothy Height, Thurgood Marshall, and Shirley Chisholm each lived a life of incandescent greatness while many African Americans lived, toiled, and died in obscurity, never achieving the recognition they deserved, but paved the way for future generations to succeed;

Whereas many African-American men and women worked against racism to achieve success, such as James Beckwourth, Bill Pickett, Colonel Allen Allensworth, Clara Brown, and many others who were pivotal in the exploration and westward expansion of the United States;

Whereas pioneers such as David Dinkins, Mae Jemison, Arthur Ashe, Oprah Winfrey, James Earl Jones, Clarence Thomas, Ursula Burns, Alice Walker, Ronald Brown, Alexis Herman, Kenneth Chenault, and Magic Johnson

have all served as positive beneficiaries of our forefathers and as great role models and leaders for future generations;

Whereas, on November 4, 2008, and again on November 6, 2012, the people of the United States elected an African-American man, Barack Obama, as President of the United States, and African Americans continue to serve the United States at the highest levels of the government and Armed Forces;

Whereas Carter G. Woodson, the “Father of Black History”, stated, “We have a wonderful history behind us.... If you are unable to demonstrate to the world that you have this record, the world will say to you, ‘You are not worthy to enjoy the blessings of democracy or anything else.’”;

Whereas Black History Month, celebrated during the month of February, dates back to 1926 when Carter G. Woodson set aside a special period of time in February to recognize the heritage and achievement of black Americans;

Whereas, on February 22, 2012, President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, along with former First Lady Laura Bush, celebrated the groundbreaking of the National Museum of African American History and Culture on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.;

Whereas Hiram Rhodes Revels, Blanche Kelso Bruce, Edward William Brooke, Carol Moseley Braun, Barack Obama, and Roland Burris have all served as African-American firsts in the exclusive body known as the United States Senate; and

Whereas, on January 2, 2013, Tim Scott became the first African American to serve as Senator of South Carolina,

and on February 7, 2013, William “Mo” Cowan became the first African American to represent Massachusetts in the Senate since 1978: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) acknowledges that all of the people of the
3 United States are the recipients of the wealth of his-
4 tory given to us by black culture;

5 (2) recognizes the importance of Black History
6 Month as an opportunity to reflect on the complex
7 history of the United States, while remaining hope-
8 ful and confident about the path that lies ahead;

9 (3) acknowledges the significance of Black His-
10 tory Month as an important opportunity to recognize
11 the tremendous contributions of African Americans
12 to the history of the United States;

13 (4) encourages the celebration of Black History
14 Month to provide a continuing opportunity for all
15 people in the United States to learn from the past
16 and to understand the experiences that have shaped
17 the United States;

18 (5) remembers the injustices that African
19 Americans have endured and commends the African-
20 American community for overcoming those injustices
21 and changing the course and nature of history by
22 forging the fight for equality; and

1 (6) agrees that while the United States began
2 in division, the United States must now move for-
3 ward with purpose, united tirelessly as one Nation,
4 indivisible, with liberty and justice for all, and honor
5 the contribution of all pioneers who help ensure the
6 legacy of these great United States.

