

House Resolution

No. 22

**Introduced by Assembly Members Mitchell, Bradford, Carter,
Davis, Hall, and Swanson**

February 9, 2012

House Resolution No. 22—Relative to Black History Month.

1 WHEREAS, Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, distinguished African
2 American author, editor, publisher, and historian, who is known
3 as the “Father of Black History,” founded Negro History Week in
4 1926, which became Black History Month in 1976, intended to
5 encourage further research, publishing, and celebrations regarding
6 the untold stories of African American heritage; and

7 WHEREAS, The history of African Americans here in the
8 United States is unique and vibrant, and it is appropriate to
9 celebrate this history during the month of February 2012, which
10 has been proclaimed as Black History Month; and

11 WHEREAS, The history of the United States is rich with
12 inspirational stories of great African American men and women
13 whose actions, words, and achievements have united Americans
14 and contributed to the success and prosperity of the United States;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, During the first millennium, the Catholic Church
17 had three popes who were either from Africa or of African descent:
18 Saint Victor I (189–99), Saint Miltiades (311–14), and Saint
19 Gelasius I (492–96); and

20 WHEREAS, The slave trade was a tragic episode in African
21 history and began in the American colonies before August 1619
22 when the first slaves arrived in Jamestown, Virginia. During the
23 course of the slave trade, an estimated 50 million African men,

1 women, and children were taken from their native continent;
2 unfortunately, only about 15 million arrived safely to the Americas.
3 The others lost their lives in transit during the dreaded Middle
4 Passage across the Atlantic Ocean; and

5 WHEREAS, The first American to shed blood in the revolution
6 that freed America from British rule was Crispus Attucks (March
7 5, 1770, Boston Massacre), an African American seaman and slave.
8 African Americans also fought in wars including the Battles of
9 Lexington and Concord in April 1775, Ticonderoga, White Plains,
10 Bennington, Brandywine, Saratoga, Savannah, Yorktown, Bunker
11 Hill, the Battle of Rhode Island on August 29, 1775, and other
12 revolutionary war battles. Many also fought in the War of 1812,
13 the Battle of New Orleans, the Civil War, the Spanish-American
14 War, World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War (Desert
15 Storm), Iraq, and Afghanistan; and

16 WHEREAS, In spite of the institution of slavery, many African
17 Americans continued to serve society honorably. During the
18 Reconstruction period, two African Americans served in the United
19 States Senate and 14 sat in the House of Representatives; and

20 WHEREAS, From the earliest days of the United States, the
21 course of its history has been greatly influenced by Black heroes,
22 leaders, and pioneers in many diverse areas, including science,
23 medicine, business, education, government, industry, and social
24 leadership; and

25 WHEREAS, Although the institutions of slavery and racial
26 segregation forced early African American culture to develop
27 independently of mainstream American culture, today African
28 American culture has become a significant part of this country's
29 culture. African American culture has made prevalent contributions
30 to American culture ranging from music, dance, clothing and
31 hairstyle fashions, cuisine, and holiday observances; and

32 WHEREAS, African American art has made vital contributions
33 to the art history of the United States. During the colonial era and
34 the early 1800s, African American art took the form of small
35 drums, quilts, wrought-iron figures, wood carvings, and ceramic
36 vessels. Soon thereafter, the earliest African American portrait
37 artists started to emerge, including G.W. Hobbs, William Simpson,
38 Robert M. Douglas Jr., Patrick Henry Reason, Joshua Johnson,
39 Robert S. Duncanson, and Scipio Moorhead; and

1 WHEREAS, In the post-Civil War period, African American
2 artists received increased recognition as it became more acceptable
3 to display African American art in museums and other art venues.
4 Major artists of the era include Edward Mitchell Bannister, Henry
5 Ossawa Tanner, and Edmonia Lewis; and

6 WHEREAS, The increased exposure of African American art
7 ultimately resulted in the Harlem Renaissance during the 1920s,
8 which was the first major public recognition of African American
9 art and produced notable artists including, Richmond Barthe, Aaron
10 Douglas, Lawrence Harris, Palmer Hayden, William H. Johnson,
11 Sargent Johnson, John Biggers, Earle Wilton Richardson, Malvin
12 Gray Johnson, Archibald Motley, Augusta Savage, Hale Woodruff,
13 and James Van Der Zee. This era also introduced African American
14 authors and poets, including W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T.
15 Washington, Zora Neale Hurston, Nella Larsen, Langston Hughes,
16 Claude McKay, and Countee Cullen; and

17 WHEREAS, African American artists continued to influence
18 art in this country during the Civil Rights era. Major artists of the
19 era include Horace Pippin, Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence,
20 William T. Williams, Norman Lewis, and Sam Gilliam, who were
21 all successfully received in galleries. Major authors such as Richard
22 Wright, James Baldwin, and Gwendolyn Brooks wrote about the
23 African American experience; and

24 WHEREAS, African American art and culture have not only
25 been incorporated and recognized in mainstream American art
26 museums, but most major cities have opened museums dedicated
27 specifically to African American art and artists. The National
28 Endowment for the Arts is also providing increased support for
29 African American artists; and

30 WHEREAS, Africans and African Americans have also been
31 great inventors, inventing and improving things such as the
32 air-conditioning unit, almanac, automatic gearshift, blood plasma
33 bag, clothes dryer, doorknob, doorstop, electric lamp bulb, elevator,
34 fire escape ladder, fountain pen, gas mask, golf tee, horseshoe,
35 lantern, lawnmower, lawn sprinkler, lock, lubricating cup,
36 refrigerating apparatus, spark plug, stethoscope, telephone
37 transmitter, thermostat control, traffic signal, and typewriter; and

38 WHEREAS, A number of these brave and accomplished
39 individuals, such as Booker T. Washington, George Washington
40 Carver, Matthew Hansen, Daniel Hale Williams, Dr. Charles Drew,

1 Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens, Curt Flood, Medgar Evers, Superior
2 Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and
3 President Barack Obama, are noted and prominently embedded in
4 American history; and

5 WHEREAS, Among those Americans who have enriched our
6 society are the members of the African American
7 community—individuals who have been steadfast in their
8 commitment to promoting brotherhood, equality, and justice for
9 all; now, therefore, be it

10 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California*, That the
11 Assembly takes great pleasure in recognizing February 2012 as
12 Black History Month, urges all residents to join in celebrating the
13 accomplishments of African Americans during Black History
14 Month, and encourages the people of California to recognize the
15 many talents, achievements, and contributions that African
16 Americans make to their communities; and be it further

17 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
18 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.