

**House Resolution**

**No. 22**

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

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February 9, 2012

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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

1 WHEREAS, The history of the United States is rich with  
2 inspirational stories of great African American men and women  
3 whose actions, words, and achievements have united Americans  
4 and contributed to the success and prosperity of the United States;  
5 and

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

10 WHEREAS, The slave trade was a tragic episode in African  
11 history and began in the American colonies before August 1619  
12 when the first slaves arrived in Jamestown, Virginia. During the  
13 course of the slave trade, an estimated 50 million African men,  
14 women, and children were taken from their native continent;  
15 unfortunately, only about 15 million arrived safely to the Americas.  
16 The others lost their lives in transit during the dreaded Middle  
17 Passage across the Atlantic Ocean; and

18 WHEREAS, The first American to shed blood in the revolution  
19 that freed America from British rule was Crispus Attucks (March  
20 5, 1770, Boston Massacre), an African American seaman and slave.  
21 African Americans also fought in wars including the Battles of  
22 Lexington and Concord in April 1775, Ticonderoga, White Plains,  
23 Bennington, Brandywine, Saratoga, Savannah, Yorktown, Bunker  
24 Hill, the Battle of Rhode Island on August 29, 1775, and other  
25 revolutionary war battles. Many also fought in the War of 1812,  
26 the Battle of New Orleans, the Civil War, the Spanish-American  
27 War, World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War (Desert  
28 Storm), Iraq, and Afghanistan; and

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

33 WHEREAS, From the earliest days of the United States, the  
34 course of its history has been greatly influenced by Black heroes,  
35 leaders, and pioneers in many diverse areas, including science,  
36 medicine, business, education, government, industry, and social  
37 leadership; and

38 WHEREAS, Although the institutions of slavery and racial  
39 segregation forced early African American culture to develop  
40 independently of mainstream American culture, today African

1 American culture has become a significant part of this country's  
2 culture. African American culture has made prevalent contributions  
3 to American culture ranging from music, dance, clothing and  
4 hairstyle fashions, cuisine, and holiday observances; and

5 WHEREAS, African American art has made vital contributions  
6 to the art history of the United States. During the colonial era and  
7 the early 1800s, African American art took the form of small  
8 drums, quilts, wrought-iron figures, wood carvings, and ceramic  
9 vessels. Soon thereafter, the earliest African American portrait  
10 artists started to emerge, including G.W. Hobbs, William Simpson,  
11 Robert M. Douglas Jr., Patrick Henry Reason, Joshua Johnson,  
12 Robert S. Duncanson, and Scipio Moorhead; and

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

18 WHEREAS, The increased exposure of African American art  
19 ultimately resulted in the Harlem Renaissance during the 1920s,  
20 which was the first major public recognition of African American  
21 art and produced notable artists including, Richmond Barthe, Aaron  
22 Douglas, Lawrence Harris, Palmer Hayden, William H. Johnson,  
23 Sargent Johnson, John Biggers, Earle Wilton Richardson, Malvin  
24 Gray Johnson, Archibald Motley, Augusta Savage, Hale Woodruff,  
25 and James Van Der Zee. This era also introduced African American  
26 authors and poets, including W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T.  
27 Washington, Zora Neale Hurston, Nella Larsen, Langston Hughes,  
28 Claude McKay, and Countee Cullen; and

29 WHEREAS, African American artists continued to influence  
30 art in this country during the Civil Rights era. Major artists of the  
31 era include Horace Pippin, Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence,  
32 William T. Williams, Norman Lewis, and Sam Gilliam, who were  
33 all successfully received in galleries. Major authors such as Richard  
34 Wright, James Baldwin, and Gwendolyn Brooks wrote about the  
35 African American experience; and

36 WHEREAS, African American art and culture have not only  
37 been incorporated and recognized in mainstream American art  
38 museums, but most major cities have opened museums dedicated  
39 specifically to African American art and artists. The National

1 Endowment for the Arts is also providing increased support for  
2 African American artists; and

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

11 WHEREAS, A number of these brave and accomplished  
12 individuals, such as Booker T. Washington, George Washington  
13 Carver, ~~Matthew Hansen, Henson~~, Daniel Hale Williams, Dr.  
14 Charles Drew, Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens, Curt Flood, Medgar  
15 Evers, Superior Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, Dr. Martin  
16 Luther King, Jr., and President Barack Obama, are noted and  
17 prominently embedded in American history; and

18 WHEREAS, Among those Americans who have enriched our  
19 society are the members of the African American  
20 community—individuals who have been steadfast in their  
21 commitment to promoting brotherhood, equality, and justice for  
22 all; now, therefore, be it

23 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California*, That the  
24 Assembly takes great pleasure in recognizing February 2012 as  
25 Black History Month, urges all residents to join in celebrating the  
26 accomplishments of African Americans during Black History  
27 Month, and encourages the people of California to recognize the  
28 many talents, achievements, and contributions that African  
29 Americans make to their communities; and be it further

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

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34 **CORRECTIONS:**

35 **Heading—Coauthors—Page 1.**

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