

Introduced by Senator Mitchell

January 15, 2014

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 76—Relative to Black History Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SCR 76, as introduced, Mitchell. Black History Month.

This measure would recognize February 2014 as Black History Month, urge all residents to join in celebrating the accomplishments of African Americans during Black History Month, and encourage the people of California to recognize the many talents, achievements, and contributions that African Americans make to their communities.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 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 and publishing regarding the untold
- 6 stories of African American heritage; and
- 7 WHEREAS, The history of African Americans here in the
- 8 United States, as well as throughout the ages, is indeed unique and
- 9 vibrant, and it is appropriate to celebrate this history during the
- 10 month of February 2014, which has been proclaimed as Black
- 11 History Month; and
- 12 WHEREAS, There is even greater cause for a reverent
- 13 celebration in 2014 as Americans reflect on the significance of the
- 14 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, and the 60th anniversary

1 of the landmark United States Supreme Court case of Brown versus
2 the Board of Education; and

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

7 WHEREAS, The slave trade was a tragic episode in African
8 history and began before August 1619 when the first slaves arrived
9 in Jamestown, Virginia. During the course of the slave trade, an
10 estimated 50 million African men, women, and children were lost
11 to their native continent, though only about 15 million arrived
12 safely to a new home. The others lost their lives on African soil
13 or along the Guinea coast, or in holds on the ships during the
14 dreaded Middle Passage across the Atlantic Ocean; and

15 WHEREAS, The first American to shed blood in the revolution
16 that freed America from British rule was Crispus Attucks (March
17 5, 1770, Boston Massacre), an African American seaman and slave.
18 African Americans also fought in wars including the Battles of
19 Lexington and Concord in April 1775, Ticonderoga, White Plains,
20 Bennington, Brandywine, Saratoga, Savannah, Yorktown, Bunker
21 Hill, the Battle of Rhode Island on August 29, 1775, and other
22 revolutionary war battles, the War of 1812, including, the Battle
23 of New Orleans, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World
24 Wars I and II, Korea, and Vietnam; and

25 WHEREAS, In spite of the African slave trade, many Africans
26 and African Americans continued to move forward in society and,
27 during the Reconstruction period, two African Americans served
28 in the United States Senate and 14 sat in the House of
29 Representatives; and

30 WHEREAS, From the earliest days of the United States, the
31 course of its history has been greatly influenced by Black heroes
32 and pioneers in many diverse areas, from science, medicine,
33 business, and education to government, industry, and social
34 leadership; and

35 WHEREAS, Africans and African Americans have also been
36 great inventors, inventing and improving things such as the
37 air-conditioning unit, almanac, automatic gearshift, blood plasma
38 bag, clothes dryer, doorknob, doorstop, electric lamp bulb, elevator,
39 fire escape ladder, fountain pen, gas mask, golf tee, horseshoe,
40 lantern, lawnmower, lawn sprinkler, lock, lubricating cup,

1 refrigerating apparatus, spark plug, stethoscope, telephone
2 transmitter, thermostat control, traffic signal, and typewriter; and
3 WHEREAS, A number of these brave and accomplished
4 individuals, such as Booker T. Washington, George Washington
5 Carver, Matthew Hansen, Daniel Hale Williams, Dr. Charles Drew,
6 Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens, Curt Flood, Medgar Evers, and,
7 of course, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., are noted prominently in
8 the history books of students nationwide, thus enabling them to
9 learn about the important and lasting contributions of these
10 individuals; and

11 WHEREAS, Among those Americans who have enriched our
12 society are the members of the African American
13 community—individuals who have been steadfast in their
14 commitment to promoting brotherhood, equality, and justice for
15 all; now, therefore, be it

16 *Resolved, by the Senate of the State of California, Assembly*
17 *thereof concurring,* That the Legislature takes great pleasure in
18 recognizing February 2014 as Black History Month, urges all
19 residents to join in celebrating the accomplishments of African
20 Americans during Black History Month, and encourages the people
21 of California to recognize the many talents, achievements, and
22 contributions that African Americans make to their communities;
23 and be it further

24 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
25 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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