

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 23

Introduced by Assembly Member Swanson
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bass, Carter, Davis, Hall, and
Price)
(Coauthor: Senator Wright)

February 11, 2009

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 23—Relative to Black History Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 23, as introduced, Swanson. Black History Month.

This measure would recognize February 2009 as Black History Month, urge all citizens 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

1 month of February 2009, which has been proclaimed as Black
2 History Month; 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, During the first millennium, the Catholic Church
8 had three popes who were either from Africa or of African descent:
9 Saint Victor I (189–99), Saint Miltiades (311–14), and Saint
10 Gelasius I (492–96); and

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

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

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

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

39 WHEREAS, Africans and African Americans have also been
40 great inventors, inventing and improving things such as the

1 air-conditioning unit, almanac, automatic gearshift, blood plasma
2 bag, clothes dryer, doorknob, doorstop, electric lamp bulb, elevator,
3 fire escape ladder, fountain pen, gas mask, golf tee, horseshoe,
4 lantern, lawnmower, lawn sprinkler, lock, lubricating cup,
5 refrigerating apparatus, spark plug, stethoscope, telephone
6 transmitter, thermostat control, traffic signal, and typewriter; and

7 WHEREAS, A number of these brave and accomplished
8 individuals, such as Booker T. Washington, George Washington
9 Carver, Matthew Hansen, Daniel Hale Williams, Dr. Charles Drew,
10 Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens, Curt Flood, Medgar Evers, and,
11 of course, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., are noted prominently in
12 the history books of students nationwide, thus enabling them to
13 learn about the important and lasting contributions of these
14 individuals; and

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

20 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
21 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature takes great pleasure in
22 recognizing February 2009 as Black History Month, urges all
23 citizens to join in celebrating the accomplishments of African
24 Americans during Black History Month, and encourages the people
25 of California to recognize the many talents, achievements, and
26 contributions that African Americans make to their communities;
27 and be it further

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