

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY FEBRUARY 26, 2009

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009—10 REGULAR SESSION

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution**

**No. 23**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Swanson**

**(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bass, Carter, Davis, Hall, and Pricc Price, Ammiano, Anderson, Arambula, Beall, Bill Berryhill, Tom Berryhill, Blakeslee, Block, Blumenfield, Brownley, Buchanan, Caballero, Charles Calderon, Chesbro, Conway, Cook, Coto, De La Torre, De Leon, DeVore, Duvall, Emmerson, Eng, Evans, Feuer, Fong, Fuentes, Fuller, Furutani, Gaines, Galgiani, Garrick, Gilmore, Hagman, Harkey, Hayashi, Hernandez, Hill, Huber, Huffman, Jeffries, Jones, Knight, Krekorian, Lieu, Logue, Bonnie Lowenthal, Ma, Mendoza, Miller, Monning, Nava, Nestande, Niello, Nielsen, John A. Perez, V. Manuel Perez, Portantino, Ruskin, Salas, Saldana, Silva, Skinner, Solorio, Audra Strickland, Torlakson, Torres, Torrico, Tran, Villines, and Yamada)**

(Coauthor: Senator Wright)

February 11, 2009

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 23, as amended, 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  
10 month of February 2009, which has been proclaimed as Black  
11 History Month; and

12 WHEREAS, The history of the United States is rich with  
13 inspirational stories of great men and noble women whose actions,  
14 words, and achievements have united Americans and contributed  
15 to the success and prosperity of the United States; 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 before August 1619 when the first slaves arrived  
22 in Jamestown, Virginia. During the course of the slave trade, an  
23 estimated 50 million African men, women, and children were lost  
24 to their native continent, though only about 15 million arrived  
25 safely to a new home. The others lost their lives on African soil  
26 or along the Guinea coast, or finally in holds on the ships during  
27 the dreaded Middle Passage across the Atlantic Ocean; and

28 WHEREAS, The first American to shed blood in the revolution  
29 that freed America from British rule was Crispus Attucks (March  
30 5, 1770, Boston Massacre), an African American seaman and slave.  
31 African Americans also fought in wars including the Battles of  
32 Lexington and Concord in April 1775, Ticonderoga, White Plains,  
33 Bennington, Brandywine, Saratoga, Savannah, Yorktown, Bunker  
34 Hill, the Battle of Rhode Island on August 29, 1775, and other  
35 revolutionary war battles, the War of 1812, including, the Battle  
36 of New Orleans, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World  
37 Wars I and II, Korea, and Vietnam; and

38 WHEREAS, In spite of the African slave trade, many Africans  
39 and African Americans continued to move forward in society;  
40 during the Reconstruction period, two African Americans served

1 in the United States Senate and 14 sat in the House of  
2 Representatives; and

3 WHEREAS, From the earliest days of the United States, the  
4 course of its history has been greatly influenced by Black heroes  
5 and pioneers in many diverse areas, from science, medicine,  
6 business, and education to government, industry, and social  
7 leadership; and

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

16 WHEREAS, A number of these brave and accomplished  
17 individuals, such as Booker T. Washington, George Washington  
18 Carver, Matthew Hansen, Daniel Hale Williams, Dr. Charles Drew,  
19 Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens, Curt Flood, Medgar Evers, and,  
20 of course, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., are noted prominently in  
21 the history books of students nationwide, thus enabling them to  
22 learn about the important and lasting contributions of these  
23 individuals; and

24 WHEREAS, Among those Americans who have enriched our  
25 society are the members of the African American  
26 community—individuals who have been steadfast in their  
27 commitment to promoting brotherhood, equality, and justice for  
28 all; now, therefore, be it

29 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*  
30 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature takes great pleasure in  
31 recognizing February 2009 as Black History Month, urges all  
32 citizens to join in celebrating the accomplishments of African  
33 Americans during Black History Month, and encourages the people  
34 of California to recognize the many talents, achievements, and  
35 contributions that African Americans make to their communities;  
36 and be it further

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

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