
Introduced by Senators Price and Wright

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bradford, Carter, Davis, Hall, Mitchell,
and Swanson)

January 12, 2011

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4—Relative to Black History Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 4, as introduced, Price. Black History Month.

This measure would recognize February 2011 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 2011, 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,

1 words, and achievements have united Americans and contributed
2 to the success and prosperity of the United States; and

3 WHEREAS, During the first millennium, the Catholic Church
4 had three popes who were either from Africa or of African descent:
5 Saint Victor I (189–99), Saint Miltiades (311–14), and Saint
6 Gelasius I (492–96); 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 finally in holds on the ships during
14 the 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;
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, Although the institutions of slavery and racial
36 segregation forced early African American culture to develop
37 independently of mainstream American culture, today African
38 American culture has become a significant part of this country's
39 culture. African American culture has made prevalent contributions

1 to American culture ranging from music, dance, clothing and
2 hairstyle fashions, cuisine, and holiday observances; and

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

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

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

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

34 WHEREAS, African American art and culture have not only
35 been incorporated and recognized in mainstream American art
36 museums, but most major cities have opened museums dedicated
37 specifically to African American art and artists. The National
38 Endowment for the Arts is also providing increased support for
39 African American artists; and

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

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

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

22 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
23 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature takes great pleasure in
24 recognizing February 2011 as Black History Month, urges all
25 residents to join in celebrating the accomplishments of African
26 Americans during Black History Month, and encourages the people
27 of California to recognize the many talents, achievements, and
28 contributions that African Americans make to their communities;
29 and be it further

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