

## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 28

Reps. O'Neal, Whitsett, Hope, Breen, Brixie, Scott, Cavanagh, Hertel, Brenda Carter, Manoogian, Young, Aiyash, Camilleri, Hammoud, Cherry, Sneller, Bolden, Anthony, Cynthia Johnson, Brabec, Witwer, Neeley, Yancey, Sowerby, Clemente and Rabhi offered the following resolution:

1           A resolution to declare February 2021 as Black History Month  
2 in the state of Michigan.

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

7           Whereas, Among those Americans who have enriched our society  
8 are the members of the Black community, individuals whose  
9 accomplishments have contributed to every endeavor throughout the

1 history of our nation and this state and who have been steadfast in  
2 their commitment to promoting equality and justice for all; and

3       Whereas, In August 1619, the first documented Africans arrived  
4 in the English colony of Virginia. The group, recorded upon arrival  
5 as "20 and Odd Negroes," was part of a larger group of West  
6 Africans enslaved by Portuguese slave traders. They were on their  
7 way to Veracruz aboard a Portuguese ship when they were captured  
8 off the coast of Mexico by an English warship and transported to  
9 Virginia, where they were put ashore at what is now Hampton,  
10 Virginia, and sold as involuntary laborers or indentured servants;  
11 and

12       Whereas, The historic arrival of the group of "20 and Odd  
13 Negroes" marked the beginning of the trend in colonial America  
14 where people of Africa were kidnapped from their homeland and  
15 transplanted to a foreign land, where they were condemned to a  
16 lifetime of slavery and racial injustices; and

17       Whereas, During the course of the slave trade, an estimated 50  
18 million African men, women, and children were lost to their native  
19 continent, though only about 15 million arrived safely to a new  
20 home. The others lost their lives on African soil or along the  
21 Guinea coast, or finally in holds on the ships during the dreaded  
22 Middle Passage across the Atlantic Ocean; and

23       Whereas, In spite of the African slave trade, and in the face  
24 of injustices and inequalities, including lynch mobs, segregation,  
25 and the denial of the basic and fundamental rights of citizenship,  
26 Black Americans continued to move forward in society; and

27       Whereas, In 2021, the vestiges of those injustices and  
28 inequalities remain evident in the society of the United States;  
29 and

1           Whereas, From the earliest days of the United States, the  
2 course of its history has been greatly influenced by Black heroes  
3 and pioneers in many diverse areas, including science, medicine,  
4 business, education, government, law, industry, and social  
5 leadership; and

6           Whereas, many Black Americans lived, toiled, and died in  
7 obscurity, never achieving the recognition they deserved, and yet  
8 paved the way for future generations to succeed; and

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

17           Whereas, The history of Blacks in America now includes the  
18 election and re-election of the first Black President of the United  
19 States and now the first Black Vice-President of the United States;  
20 and

21           Whereas, Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, the distinguished Black  
22 author, editor, publisher, and historian who is known as the  
23 "Father of Black History," founded Negro History Week in 1926,  
24 which became Black History Month in 1976, celebrated during the  
25 month of February, with the intent to encourage further research  
26 and publications regarding the untold stories of Black heritage;  
27 and

28           Whereas, Dr. Woodson stated, "We have a wonderful history  
29 behind us...if you are unable to demonstrate to the world that you

1 have this record, the world will say to you, 'You are not worthy to  
2 enjoy the blessings of democracy or anything else.'"; now,  
3 therefore, be it

4       Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of  
5 this legislative body declare February 2021 as Black History Month  
6 in the state of Michigan. We urge all citizens to join in  
7 celebrating the achievements and contributions of Black Americans  
8 that have helped create the legacy of this great country and  
9 encourages the people of Michigan to create equity and equality for  
10 education, economics, and social justice.