

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 32

Reps. Fink, Bellino, Tisdell, Frederick, Filler, Peterson, Paquette, Brann, Anthony, Roth, Damoose, Outman, Beeler, Maddock, Thanedar, Posthumus, Borton, Markkanen, Kuppa, LaGrand, Kahle, Brabec, Wakeman, O'Malley, Yaroch, Lilly and Whiteford offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to declare February 14, 2021, as Frederick
2 Douglass Day in the state of Michigan.

3 Whereas, Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in February
4 1818 in the state of Maryland, never knowing the exact date of his
5 own birth but adopting Valentine's Day as his birthday after his
6 mother Harriet Bailey called him her "Little Valentine"; and

7 Whereas, Mr. Douglass escaped from bondage at the age of 20,
8 whereupon he began a life dedicated to the abolition of slavery in
9 the United States and the recognition of Black Americans as free

1 and equal citizens; and

2 Whereas, Frederick Douglass worked throughout his childhood to
3 learn to read and write, even against the wishes of the family
4 which claimed to own him, and shortly after his escape from slavery
5 became a famed and persuasive orator, detailing to Northern
6 audiences the horrors of life in the South for slaves and arguing
7 for the fundamental equality of all Americans; and

8 Whereas, Mr. Douglass made several visits to Michigan, where
9 he met with other proponents of abolition across the state,
10 including in Detroit, Hillsdale, and Ypsilanti, and gave speeches
11 on civil rights; and

12 Whereas, In freedom, Frederick Douglass married Anna Murray
13 and raised five children, and following Anna's death married Helen
14 Pitts; and

15 Whereas, During the Civil War, Frederick Douglass recruited
16 the first Black military unit in United States history, the 54th
17 Massachusetts Infantry, which included his sons Charles and Lewis;
18 and

19 Whereas, Mr. Douglass knew and advised many prominent American
20 statesmen and citizens of his day, including Ida B. Wells, Susan B.
21 Anthony, Charles Remond, William Lloyd Garrison, and John Marshall
22 Harlan, as well as Abraham Lincoln and every President of the
23 United States who served after Lincoln until Douglass' death in
24 1888; and

25 Whereas, Mr. Douglass served our country as U.S. Marshall and
26 Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia, and as Minister to
27 Haiti; and

28 Whereas, To this day, Frederick Douglass' autobiographies and
29 speeches serve as powerful testimonies to the motto of Douglass'

1 newspaper the North Star, which asserts "Right is of no sex—Truth
2 is of no Color—God is the Father of us all, and we are all
3 Brethren"; and

4 Whereas, February 14, 2021 will be recognized as the 203rd
5 anniversary of Frederick Douglass' birth; now, therefore, be it

6 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of
7 this legislative body declare February 14, 2021, as Frederick
8 Douglass Day in the state of Michigan.