

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1080

Recognizing and celebrating the significance of Black History Month 2026 and its theme, “A Century of Black History Commemorations”.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 25, 2026

Mr. GREEN of Texas (for himself, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. AMO, Ms. ANSARI, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BELL, Mr. BERA, Mr. BISHOP, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. BROWNLEY, Ms. BYNUM, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONAWAY, Ms. CROCKETT, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Mr. DELUZIO, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. ELFRETH, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Mr. FIGURES, Mrs. FLETCHER, Mrs. FOUSHEE, Mr. FROST, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Ms. SCANLON, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. IVEY, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. LANDSMAN, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Mr. LIEU, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. McCLAIN DELANEY, Ms. McCLELLAN, Mr. MCGARVEY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. McIVER, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MENG, Mr. MFUME, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. MULLIN, Ms. PRESSLEY, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Ms. ROSS, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SEWELL, Ms. SIMON, Ms. STRICKLAND, Mr. SWALWELL, Ms. TITUS, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. TORRES of New York, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. VINDMAN, Mr. WALKINSHAW, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. BROWN, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Ms. RIVAS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

RESOLUTION

Recognizing and celebrating the significance of Black History Month 2026 and its theme, “A Century of Black History Commemorations”.

Whereas this resolution may be cited as the “Original Black History Month Resolution of 2026”;

Whereas the Association for the Study of African American Life and History is the preeminent organization of its kind;

Whereas the theme for Black History Month 2026 is “A Century of Black History Commemorations”, which explores how Black history and life commemorations impact and transform the status of Black people in the United States and across the diaspora;

Whereas this resolution highlights aspects of momentous events, seminal moments, and historic personalities in Black history that have been historically denied a true and factual spotlight;

Whereas it is hereby declared and decreed that Black women and men of African ancestry whose historic records of accomplishments have not been proudly and widely celebrated shall be honored as “unsung souls”;

Whereas history is impacted by heroic individuals who are not unsung souls that take extraordinary steps to ensure that our world imbues liberty and justice for people of African descent, they shall be celebrated as righteous intercessors;

Whereas all unsung souls and righteous intercessors deserve to be credited for their historic contributions, and their stories must be widely celebrated;

Whereas it should be understood that the untold or understated accomplishments of African Americans and historic events that follow are less than an introduction to the greatest story yet to be told;

Whereas, in spite of more than 240 years of enslavement, approximately 100 years of convict leasing, and centuries of lawful segregation and continued racism, Black history commemorations are transforming the incomplete collective narrative from one that minimizes Black identity to one that affirms the powerful reality that the unsung souls enslaved in America were America's economic foundational mothers and fathers who helped build and shape the Nation's prosperous history;

Whereas, on December 31, 1862, many free and enslaved unsung souls gathered in secret to await the news that the Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect, marking the first "Watch Night", also known as "Freedom's Eve";

Whereas Watch Night remains a living tradition, with annual services held in African American churches on New Years Eve that extend through midnight and include praise and worship;

Whereas this celebration of freedom transformed January 1 from "Heartbreak Day", a painful and historically dreaded day when families of unsung souls were separated at slave auctions, into a day of liberation and commemoration;

Whereas, on May 1, 1865, following the end of the Civil War, newly freed unsung souls in Charleston, North Carolina organized one of the earliest commemorations for fallen soldiers in the Union Army;

Whereas the commemoration drew approximately 10,000 mostly Black participants and featured a parade, grave dedications, prayer, spiritual singing, and communal picnics;

Whereas this commemoration played a prominent role in the creation of Decoration Day, which later became the national holiday, Memorial Day;

Whereas the brigade of the 25th Army Corps of the Union Army, comprised of approximately 1,000 Black soldiers are unsung souls;

Whereas this brigade advanced Major General Gordon Granger, a righteous intercessor, to Galveston, Texas, prior to his arrival, captured Galveston, chased rebel soldiers into Mexico, spread news of emancipation, and liberated thousands of enslaved unsung souls;

Whereas the actions of the 25th Army Corps made it safe for Major General Gordon Granger to issue General Order Number 3 in Galveston, formally announcing freedom to formerly enslaved unsung souls, symbolizing the end of slavery in the United States and giving birth to Juneteenth;

Whereas Juneteenth was proclaimed a national holiday on June 17, 2021, after having been historically celebrated by people of African descent in Texas and the United States, as well as other countries such as Canada, Jamaica, and Nigeria;

Whereas, across the globe, commemorations marking the end of slavery, including the Haitian revolution, the abolition of the slave trade, and the end of slavery in Jamaica, serve to unite the diaspora through shared traditions of resistance and the celebration of freedom;

Whereas John Brown, an abolitionist, Christian, and radical opponent of slavery, is an exemplar of a righteous intercessor;

Whereas Brown led several armed anti-slavery movements, in accordance with his strongly held Christian beliefs, including during the 1850s Bleeding Kansas crisis and the 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia;

Whereas Brown's efforts led to his execution as the first person in the United States to be tried for treason, transforming him into a heroic martyr who inspired Union soldiers during the Civil War;

Whereas Frank M. Johnson, a White United States district and circuit judge known to have "altered forever the face of the South", is a preeminent exemplar of a righteous intercessor;

Whereas Judge Frank M. Johnson often faced death threats and intimidation from the Ku Klux Klan for issuing landmark civil rights rulings that ended segregation, advanced racial integration, and challenged state resistance, most notably in *Browder v. Gayle* and *Williams v. Wallace*;

Whereas *Browder v. Gayle* ended the invidious segregation of Alabama's public transportation system and brought closure to the historic Montgomery Bus Boycott led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;

Whereas *Williams v. Wallace* provided for the safety of the historic Selma to Montgomery march which provided President Lyndon B. Johnson the political muscle necessary to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965;

Whereas Claudette Colvin is a preeminent exemplar of an unsung Black soul;

Whereas Colvin, a 15-year-old high school student and NAACP Youth Council member, is an exemplar of an unsung soul;

Whereas Colvin was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a White woman, 9 months prior to Rosa Parks' refusal, and was a plaintiff in the Federal court case, *Browder v. Gayle*, referenced above, that subsequently led the Supreme Court to declare segregation on all public transportation unconstitutional;

Whereas, in the early 1900s, Black scholars worked to institutionalize the study of Black history, recognizing that the White-dominated historical spaces refused to develop the institutional infrastructure necessary to study Black history and often diminished, distorted, or intentionally deleted Black experiences;

Whereas Carter G. Woodson, the son of formerly enslaved unsung souls, is the "father of Black History Month" and the supreme exemplar of an unsung Black soul;

Whereas Woodson founded the *Journal of Negro History*, and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, now the *Journal of African American History*, and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, respectively;

Whereas, in 1926, Woodson established Negro History Week, the precursor to what is now Black History Month, selecting the second week in February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass;

Whereas Woodson's Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now the Association for the Study of African American Life and History) helped legitimize the study of Black history within White academic circles and created the organizational structure to make Black history commemorations possible;

Whereas Woodson's *Journal of Negro History* (now the *Journal of African American History*) provided opportunities for women scholars to publish their work, free from ridicule, in the 1900s, and continues to advance research on all aspects of African-American life today;

Whereas Woodson's work has had a profound and lasting impact, fundamentally reshaping how Black history is researched, preserved, and shared in the United States today;

Whereas George Washington Williams, a Civil War soldier, Baptist minister, and historian, is an exemplar of an unsung soul;

Whereas Williams wrote pioneering histories on the contributions of African Americans in the United States, including the "History of the Negro Race in America from 1619–1880", one of the first overall histories of African Americans, recognizing Black agency and achievements in the broader public sphere;

Whereas Mary McLeod Bethune, an educator, institution builder, and civil rights leader, is an exemplar of an unsung soul;

Whereas Bethune founded several organizations including, the *Aframerican Woman's Journal*, the National Council of Negro Women, and Bethune-Cookman University, which expanded educational access to Black history in the United States institutions of higher education;

Whereas W.E.B. Du Bois, a sociologist, historian, scholar, and civil rights leader, is an exemplar of an unsung soul;

Whereas Du Bois advanced the academic study of African-American history and social conditions through pioneering works such as "The Souls of Black Folk", co-

founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), advocated for the importance of academic intellect in the African-American society, and challenged racist systems by asserting the intellectual, political, and cultural equality of Black Americans;

Whereas Zora Neale Hurston, a prominent writer, anthropologist, and cultural preservationist, is an exemplar of an unsung soul;

Whereas Hurston documented the richness of African-American life, folklore, and culture through its own perspective, preserving the authenticity of Black cultural identity free from colonial distortions, laying the foundations for Africana Studies;

Whereas Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, a historian, writer, and collector, is an exemplar of an unsung soul;

Whereas Schomburg dedicated his life to preserving books, manuscripts, and artifacts on African and African diasporic history, leading to the foundation of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York, which continues to ensure Black people can research, define, and tell their own stories;

Whereas these scholars rejected racist historical frameworks and built durable scholarly traditions that cultivate a comprehensive public education of Black history centered on self-representation and intellectual autonomy;

Whereas Black history and life commemorations are made possible today because of the foundational work of these and many other scholars as well as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History;

Whereas institutions such as museums, libraries, places of worship, parks, and cultural heritage sites annually cele-

brate and uplift Black history through programming, exhibitions, camps, and book displays;

Whereas national Black history and life commemoration sites include national monuments, such as the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, the African American Civil War Memorial, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, and the African Burial Ground National Monument;

Whereas Black history and life commemorations are a moral imperative as they serve as a critical counterweight to recurring historical narratives that seek to whitewash, eradicate, or minimize the significance of Black people and their contributions to American history;

Whereas the intentional obfuscation and elimination of the truth about Black history serves to protect White supremacy, avoid societal reckoning on race relations, and set the conditions to preserve White superiority through a tradition of denying the true history of Black people;

Whereas, today, the Trump administration's attempts to erase and sanitize Blackness out of history, by removing the slavery exhibit at Independence National Historical Park, censoring content at institutions like the Smithsonian, banning books, and terminating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives across sectors, represent the continuation of a tradition of diminishing and denying the true history of Africans in America;

Whereas Black life and history commemorations thwart these attempts to diminish African-American history by recognizing and recovering the legacies of unsung heroes who

- 1 awareness of the great contributions and accomplishments
- 2 of Africans in America that benefit all Americans.

