

1 A RESOLUTION honoring the 20th Black History Celebration and recognizing
2 that Black history is American history.

3 WHEREAS, in 1776, people envisioned the United States as a new nation dedicated
4 to the proposition stated in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created
5 equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among
6 these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness"; and

7 WHEREAS, Africans were first brought involuntarily to the shores of the United
8 States as early as the 17th century; and

9 WHEREAS, African Americans suffered enslavement and subsequently faced the
10 injustices of lynch mobs, segregation, and denial of the basic and fundamental rights of
11 citizenship; and

12 WHEREAS, in 2024, the vestiges of those injustices and inequalities remain
13 evident in the society of the United States; and

14 WHEREAS, in the face of injustices, people of good will and of all races in the
15 United States have distinguished themselves with a commitment to the noble ideals on
16 which the United States was founded and have fought courageously for the rights and
17 freedom of African Americans and others; and

18 WHEREAS, the contributions of African Americans from all walks of life
19 throughout the history of the United States reflect the greatness of the United States; and

20 WHEREAS, many African Americans lived, toiled, and died in obscurity, never
21 achieving the recognition those individuals deserved, and yet paved the way for future
22 generations to succeed; and

23 WHEREAS, African Americans continue to serve the United States at the highest
24 levels of business, government, and the military; and

25 WHEREAS, the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass inspired the
26 creation of Negro History Week, the precursor to Black History Month; and

27 WHEREAS, Negro History Week represented the culmination of the efforts of Dr.

1 Carter G. Woodson, the "Father of Black History," to enhance knowledge of Black
2 history through The Journal of Negro History, published by the Association for the Study
3 of African American Life and History, which was founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson
4 and Jesse E. Moorland; and

5 WHEREAS, in 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson proposed and launched a weeklong
6 celebration of the individuals and occasions having a significant impact on African
7 American history, and has since been known as the "Father of Black History"; and

8 WHEREAS, Dr. Carter G. Woodson had ties to the Commonwealth, working in the
9 Kentucky coal mines as a child. The son of former slaves, he enrolled in high school at
10 the age of 20 and went on to graduate from Berea College with a bachelor's degree,
11 received his master's degree from the University of Chicago, and earned a Ph.D. from
12 Harvard University, where he was one of the first scholars to study African American
13 history; and

14 WHEREAS, Dr. Carter G. Woodson stated, "We have a wonderful history behind
15 us... If you are unable to demonstrate to the world that you have this record, the world
16 will say to you, 'You are not worthy to enjoy the blessings of democracy or anything
17 else.'"; and

18 WHEREAS, since its founding, the United States has imperfectly progressed
19 toward noble goals; and

20 WHEREAS, the history of the United States is the story of people regularly
21 affirming high ideals, striving to reach those ideals but often failing, and then struggling
22 to come to terms with the disappointment of that failure, before committing to try again;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, during the month of February 2024, across the United States of
25 America and this great Commonwealth, observances are held to increase public
26 awareness of the importance of Black history and the contributions that African
27 Americans have made toward this county; and

1 WHEREAS, in 2024, the Kentucky Black Legislative Caucus and all Kentuckians
2 pause to recognize and reflect on the accomplishments African Americans have made in
3 this Commonwealth and across the nation throughout each year and throughout the
4 history of this nation, and in so doing we commemorate our 20th annual Black History
5 Celebration; and

6 WHEREAS, John A. Hardin, Ph.D., will serve as this year's keynote speaker.
7 During his 27 years at Western Kentucky University, Dr. Hardin has held positions as a
8 faculty member, Assistant Dean, and as Assistant to the Provost for Diversity
9 Enhancement. He was appointed as Professor Emeritus of History at WKU in 2018. Dr.
10 Hardin is a published author of three books and has served as an elected member of the
11 Governing Board of the Kentucky Historical Society and as an appointed member and
12 vice-chair of the Kentucky African-American Heritage Commission. His research focuses
13 on 20th Century African American history, and in 2015, he was one of three general
14 editors of the Kentucky African American Encyclopedia, published by the University
15 Press of Kentucky; and

16 WHEREAS, speakers for the event also include Governor Andy Beshear, Chief
17 Justice Lurance B. VanMeter, legislative leaders, and members of the Black Legislative
18 Caucus; and

19 WHEREAS, we all recognize that Black history is American history; and

20 WHEREAS, not only during the month of February but throughout the year, it is
21 important that we know our history to beneficially meet the challenges of now, and, into
22 the future, we must understand what brought us to this moment; and

23 WHEREAS, the citizens of this great Commonwealth should recommit themselves
24 to an ideal America where equality and justice will always prevail, and to the principles
25 of love, wisdom, and compassion toward one another;

26 NOW, THEREFORE,

27 ***Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of***

1 ***Kentucky:***

2 ➔Section 1. The members of the Senate, individually and collectively, hereby
3 celebrate Black History and the 20th annual Black History Celebration, and:

4 (1) Acknowledge that all people of this Commonwealth and the United States are
5 the recipients of the wealth of history provided by Black culture;

6 (2) Recognize the importance of Black history as an opportunity to reflect on the
7 complex history, while remaining hopeful and confident about the path ahead;

8 (3) Acknowledge the significance of the Black history as an important
9 opportunity to commemorate the tremendous contributions of African Americans to the
10 history of the United States and this great Commonwealth;

11 (4) Encourage the celebration of Black history to provide a continuing
12 opportunity for all people to learn from the past and understand the experiences that have
13 shaped the United States and this great Commonwealth; and

14 (5) Move forward with purpose, united tirelessly as a nation "indivisible, with
15 liberty and justice for all."

16 ➔Section 2. The Clerk of the Senate is directed to transmit a copy of this
17 Resolution to Senator Gerald A. Neal.