



HR0817

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, Black History Month is an annual celebration which  
3 recognizes that over the last 150 years, beginning with the  
4 Emancipation Proclamation and continuing with the Civil Rights  
5 Movement, African Americans have made great strides and  
6 advancements toward equality; and

7           WHEREAS, The precursor to Black History Month was "Negro  
8 History Week" was started in 1926 by historian and University  
9 of Chicago alumnus Carter G. Woodson and the Association for  
10 the Study of Negro Life and History; the second week of  
11 February was chosen because it marked the birthdays of  
12 President Abraham Lincoln and abolitionist Frederick Douglas;  
13 primary emphasis was placed on encouraging the coordinated  
14 teaching of the history of African Americans in the nation's  
15 public schools; and

16           WHEREAS, In 1970, Black History Week was expanded into  
17 Black History Month, with the first celebration taking place at  
18 Kent State University; as part of the 1976 United States  
19 Bicentennial, Black History Month was officially recognized by  
20 President Gerald Ford and the U.S. government; and

21           WHEREAS, Even with the numerous positive advancements made  
22 by African Americans since the Emancipation Proclamation,

1 which are documented during Black History Month, many  
2 communities still suffer from unacceptable conditions such as  
3 unemployment, poverty, mortgage foreclosures, deficiencies in  
4 public health services, and crime; and

5 WHEREAS, These economic and societal challenges created or  
6 exacerbated conditions which include inequalities in access to  
7 justice in the civil court system, an overburdened and  
8 ineffective criminal justice system, overcrowding conditions  
9 in correctional facilities, increased homelessness, increases  
10 in teen pregnancy, inadequate educational opportunities, a  
11 lack of affordable housing, insufficient delivery of social  
12 services to the less fortunate, and deficiencies in the  
13 delivery of public health services; and

14 WHEREAS, Unemployment is a lingering problem for the  
15 economy as a whole, but a study revealed that the unemployment  
16 rate for blacks in Illinois was 17.5%, compared to 8.2% for  
17 whites and 9.8% for all workers; 75.5% of homicide victims in  
18 the State of Illinois are black, and in the first months of  
19 2012, when there was a 38% increase in the homicide rate, 77.6%  
20 of homicide victims in the City of Chicago were black; the teen  
21 birth rate in the United States was 38.1 births for every 1,000  
22 teens, but in a comparable time period in Illinois the rate for  
23 black teens was 77.9 births for every 1,000, while the white  
24 teen birth rate was 20.6 per every 1,000 teens; the inmate

1 population in the Illinois Correctional system is  
2 approximately 58% black and the high proportion of young black  
3 males with criminal convictions is a well-recognized  
4 phenomenon; and

5 WHEREAS, Black leaders in Illinois are not alone in  
6 recognizing that these broad social problems often strike the  
7 hardest in the black community; it is painful for the black  
8 leaders to ponder the stories of human struggle, despair, and  
9 hurt that all too often over shadow the stories of success and  
10 hope; and

11 WHEREAS, State government resources are expended in  
12 ever-increasing amounts to address these social and economic  
13 problems and those expenditures are a significant drain on the  
14 State's road to financial stability; therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
16 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
17 we celebrate Black History Month and recognize how far African  
18 Americans have come in the past 150 years; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, We acknowledge the continuing struggles of those  
20 within the African American communities of the State and the  
21 country and encourage Governor Quinn to address the ongoing  
22 issues affecting those communities; and be it further

1           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
2 delivered to Governor Pat Quinn.