



Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie



Chairman Phil Mendelson



Councilmember Anita Bonds



Councilmember Elissa Silverman



Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.



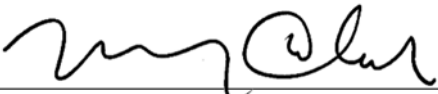
Councilmember Christina Henderson



Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau



Councilmember Brooke Pinto



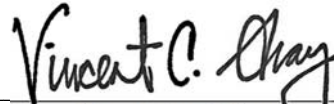
Councilmember Mary M. Cheh



Councilmember Janeese Lewis George



Councilmember Charles Allen



Councilmember Vincent C. Gray



Councilmember Trayon White, Sr.

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To celebrate the legacy, achievements, and contributions of African Americans in the District of Columbia, to recognize the important role African Americans played in American history and to declare February as Black History Month,

WHEREAS, in 1926 scholar and historian, Dr. Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (currently known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)) initiated the celebration of "Negro History Week" during the second week of February;

WHEREAS, Black History Month was first proposed by Black educators and the Black United Students at Kent State University in February 1969, and the first celebration of Black History Month took place at Kent State one year later, from January 2 to February 28, 1970;

WHEREAS, this tradition became a nationally recognized occurrence during the United States Bicentennial celebration in 1976. President Gerald Ford said the nation should "seize the

opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history”;

WHEREAS, Black History Month is celebrated in several countries around the world, including Canada, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands;

WHEREAS, Africans were first brought involuntarily to the shores of the now United States by the Spanish as early as the 16th century when Spanish King Charles V gave Hernando DeSoto permission to bring 50 African slaves to Florida;

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

WHEREAS, in contravention of those stated ideals, African Americans suffered enslavement and subsequently faced the injustices of lynch mobs, segregation, and denial of the basic and fundamental rights of citizenship;

WHEREAS, in 2022, African Americans still suffer from the effects of those injustices and inequalities, which remain apparent in the society of the United States;

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

WHEREAS, Washington, DC has an abhorrent history of slavery and racial segregation;

WHEREAS, The DC Compensated Emancipation Act of 1862, was signed by President Abraham Lincoln on April 16, 1862. The act ended slavery in Washington, DC, freed 3,100 individuals, reimbursed those who had legally owned them and offered the newly freed women and men money to emigrate;

WHEREAS, in spite of its history, Washington, DC serves as a center of African American culture and the epicenter of historical struggles for abolition, civil rights, and racial equity;

WHEREAS, Washington, DC is home to countless destinations devoted to educating visitors from around the world on Black history and the accomplishments of Black Americans, including the National Museum of African American History and Culture, National Museum of African Art, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, Malcolm X Park, Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, the Anacostia Community Museum, the District’s African American Heritage Trail, and the African American Civil War Museum and Memorial;

WHEREAS, Howard University and Howard University School of Law were founded in Washington, DC as historically Black institutions of higher education to offer high-quality education to African American students at a time when they were not welcome at other educational institutions;

WHEREAS, in 1870, the Preparatory High School for Negro Youth (now Dunbar High School) was founded as the first public high school for African Americans in the United States;

WHEREAS, in 1871, Frederick Douglass was appointed by President Ulysses S. Grant to serve on the eleven-member Legislative Council of the District of Columbia, and U.S. Marshal for the District of Columbia. In 1877, Mr. Douglass became the first African American confirmed for a presidential appointment by the United States Senate;

WHEREAS, in 1896, Mary Church Terrell, educator and civil and women's rights advocate, was the first Black woman appointed to the District of Columbia Board of Education, the founding president of the National Association of Colored Women and a founder of the NAACP;

WHEREAS, world renowned jazz music pioneer Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington was born in Washington, DC on April 29, 1899 and is honored with 14 Grammy Awards, a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom;

WHEREAS, in 1933, the New Negro Alliance launched the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work," campaign to protest discriminatory hiring practices in white-owned businesses in Washington, D.C.;

WHEREAS, Marvin Gaye, born in Washington, DC on April 2, 1939 at Freedmen's Hospital, now Howard University Hospital, and educated at Cardozo High School, was honored with a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award and induction into the Rhythm and Blues Music Hall of Fame, the Songwriters Hall of Fame, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame;

WHEREAS, Chuck Brown, guitarist, bandleader, singer, and Godfather of Go-Go, moved to the District in the 1940s and developed DC's own musical genre, Go-Go, which continues to influence artists and music across the country and has become a rallying cry to defend and preserve DC's culture;

WHEREAS, in 1943, Mary McLeod Bethune, educator, stateswoman, and philanthropist, operated the National Council of Negro Women in Washington, DC, and led Franklin Roosevelt's Black Cabinet, advising the administration on issues facing Black people in America;

WHEREAS, in 1957, Washington, DC's African American population grew to over 50 percent, making it the first predominantly Black major city in the nation, leading a nationwide trend;

WHEREAS, on August 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his renowned "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC; and

WHEREAS, Washington, DC's Black residents have created and sustained a rich culture that permeates life in the District that residents still experience and appreciate today.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, This resolution may be cited as the "Black History Month Recognition Resolution of 2022".

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes the exceptional contributions of African Americans to the United States and to the District of Columbia, honors the countless African Americans who have shaped the District's history, and declares February as Black History Month.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.