



Home	Bill Information	California Law	Publications	Other Resources	My Subscriptions	My Favorites
------	------------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------	------------------	--------------

**ACR-18 Black History Month.** (2021-2022)

SHARE THIS:  

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 18**

**CHAPTER 10**

Relative to Black History Month.

[ Filed with Secretary of State April 07, 2021. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

ACR 18, Kamlager. Black History Month.

This measure would recognize February 2021 as Black History Month, urge all citizens to join in celebrating the accomplishments of African Americans during Black History Month, and encourage the people of California to recognize the many talents of African Americans and the achievements and contributions they make to their communities to create equity and equality for education, economics, and social justice. The measure would also recognize the significance in protecting citizens' right to vote and remedying racial discrimination in voting.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, The history of the United States is rich with inspirational stories of great individuals whose actions, words, and achievements have united Americans and contributed to the success and prosperity of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Among those Americans who have enriched our society are the members of the African American community, individuals whose accomplishments have contributed to every endeavor throughout the history of our nation and who have been steadfast in their commitment to promoting brotherhood, equality, and justice for all; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, the distinguished African American author, editor, publisher, and historian who is known as the "Father of Black History," founded Negro History Week in 1926, which became Black History Month in 1976, with the intent to encourage further research and publications regarding the untold stories of African American heritage; and

WHEREAS, In August 1619, the first documented Africans arrived in the English colony of Virginia. The group, recorded upon arrival as "20 and odd Negroes," was part of a larger group of West Africans enslaved by Portuguese slave traders. They were on their way to Veracruz aboard a Portuguese ship when they were captured off the coast of Mexico by an English warship and transported to Virginia, where they were put ashore at what is now Hampton, Virginia, and sold as involuntary laborers or indentured servants; and

WHEREAS, During the course of the slave trade, an estimated 50 million African men, women, and children were lost to their native continent. The majority of those individuals, about 35 million, lost their lives on African soil or along the Guinea coast, or finally in the holds of ships during the dreaded Middle Passage across the Atlantic Ocean; and

WHEREAS, African Americans have suffered due to this enslavement and subsequently faced the injustices of lynchings, segregation, and denial of their basic and fundamental rights; and

WHEREAS, From the earliest days of the United States, the course of its history has been greatly influenced by African American heroes and pioneers in many diverse areas, including science, medicine, business, education, government, industry, and social leadership; and

WHEREAS, African Americans of all walks of life have made significant contributions throughout the history of the United States; and

WHEREAS, In the face of brutality and injustice, African Americans continue to serve the United States at the highest levels of business, government, and the military; and

WHEREAS, African American migration led to the emergence of both Black industrial workers and Black entrepreneurs, resulting in the formation of a new society, which included a variety of urban churches and new denomination but also new music forms, including ragtime, blues, and jazz; and

WHEREAS, Africans and African Americans have been great inventors, inventing and improving on innovations, as witnessed in the scientific advancements of Benjamin Banneker, George Washington Carver, George Crum, Charles Drew, Sarah Goode, Euphemia Lofton Haynes, Mae Jemison, Thomas Jennings, Katherine Johnson, Norbert Rillieux, Neil deGrasse Tyson, and Granville T. Woods; and

WHEREAS, Before the passage of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, voters faced disenfranchisement through poll taxes, literacy tests, and other tactics intended to keep African Americans from the polls on Election Day; and

WHEREAS, The Civil Rights Movement helped change public policy from segregation to integration, resulting in the repeal of the post-Reconstruction era state laws mandating racial segregation in the South, known as the "Jim Crow Laws," thereby leading to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and other antidiscrimination laws aimed at ending economic, legal, and social segregation in America; and

WHEREAS, In November of 1966, the Honorable Yvonne Brathwaite Burke of the City of Los Angeles was elected the first African American woman to the California State Legislature; and

WHEREAS, In 1970, Wilson Riles became the first African American elected to statewide office, when he began a 12-year tenure as state Superintendent of Public Instruction; and

WHEREAS, In 1976, the United States government officially recognized Black History Month, calling upon the public to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history"; and

WHEREAS, In January of 1980, Willie Lewis Brown, Jr. became the first African American Speaker in a state legislature when he was selected for the post in the California Assembly. Speaker Brown held the Speakership until 1995 when he was elected Mayor of the City of San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, In January of 1992, E. Dotson Wilson became the first African American Chief Clerk and Parliamentarian in the State of California; and

WHEREAS, In 2001, George W. Bush appointed Colin Powell as Secretary of State, making him the first African American to serve as America's top diplomat; and

WHEREAS, On November 14, 2004, Condoleezza Rice was appointed Secretary of State by George W. Bush. She was the first African American woman to serve as Secretary of State; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, Barack H. Obama was elected the first African American President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, Karen Bass was elected to serve as the 67th Speaker of the California State Assembly, becoming the first African American woman in United States history to serve as a Speaker of a state legislative body; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, Susan Rice became the first Black woman to become United States Ambassador to the United Nations; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, Eric Holder became the first African American Attorney General, later heading a President Obama initiative to commute or pardon the prison sentences of nonviolent drug offenders; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, Guion S. Bluford, the first African American to travel in space, and was inducted into the United States Astronaut Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, In August 22, 2011, The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. opened to the public, and was officially dedicated on October 16; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, President Barack H. Obama was elected to serve a second term; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, California historically elected the most African Americans to serve in the Legislature, totaling 12 members; and

WHEREAS, In 2013, Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi formed the Black Lives Matter Network with the mission to “eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes” in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman, a Florida man who shot and killed unarmed 17-year-old Trayvon Martin on February 26, 2012; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, Loretta Lynch became the first African American woman to hold the position of Attorney General; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, then-President Barack Obama awarded physicist and mathematician Katherine Johnson the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her pioneering work which helped launch the first use of digital electronic computers at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and influenced Black women to work in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and

WHEREAS, On September 24, 2016, the National Museum of African American History and Culture opened as the only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American life, history, and culture; and

WHEREAS, On September 25, 2016, the Black Lives Matter movement gained renewed attention when San Francisco 49ers players Eric Reid, Eli Harold, and quarterback Colin Kaepernick kneeled during the national anthem before the game against the Seattle Seahawks to draw attention to recent acts of police brutality; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, Kamala D. Harris was elected as a United States Senator for California, the second African American woman and first South Asian American Senator in history; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, the California Legislative Black Caucus marked the 50th Anniversary of their founding; and

WHEREAS, The 116th Congress included 52 Black representatives, a record high and a large increase since 1965; and

WHEREAS, On February 9, 2018, Governor Jerry Brown appointed a new commissioner to the California Highway Patrol, Warren Stanley, the first African American person to hold the rank of commissioner; and

WHEREAS, In June 2018, the City of San Francisco elected its first African American female mayor, London Breed; and

WHEREAS, In May 2019, Lonnie Bunch became the first African American Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution; and

WHEREAS, August 2019, marked 400 years since the first arrival of Africans to present-day America, and the United States Congress established the 400 Years of African American History Commission to commemorate the historic heritage and contributions that Americans of African descent have made to help shape the cultural, academic, social, economic, and moral attributes of this nation; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, the last ship arriving in the United States with slaves, the Clotilda, was found off of Africatown, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, the late poet and writer Maya Angelou was inducted into the California Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, The year 2019 marked the highest number of African American members serving in the United States Congress, totaling 55 members; and

WHEREAS, In February 2019, Stacey Abrams became the first African American woman to deliver a response to the State of the Union address; and

WHEREAS, On February 12, 2019, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) marked its 110th anniversary, which was spurred by growing racial violence in the early 20th century. February 12, 1909, was chosen because it was the centennial anniversary of the birth of President Abraham Lincoln; and

WHEREAS, In January 2020, Sue Parker became the first woman to serve as Chief Clerk of the California Assembly; and

WHEREAS, In August 2020, Dr. Michael Drake became the first African American President of the University of California; and

WHEREAS, In 2020, the number of Black Americans eligible to vote for president reached a record 300,000,000 Nationwide, Black eligible voters made up 12.5 percent of the United States electorate, up from 11.5 percent in 2000; and

WHEREAS, Black Lives Matter gained national recognition after collective outrage and outcry over the killings of unarmed Black people, such as Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and most notably George Floyd on May 25, 2020; and

WHEREAS, In 2020, Kamala D. Harris was elected Vice President of the United States on the Democratic ticket with President-elect Joseph Biden. Harris is the first female Vice President in United States history, the first Asian American, and first African American vice president in United States history; and

WHEREAS, In late 2020, Nigerian-American economist Adewale "Wally" Adeyemo was nominated by President-Elect Joseph Biden to become the first Black Deputy Secretary of Treasury; and

WHEREAS, In 2020, Justice Marty Jenkins became the first openly gay and third African American man to serve on the California Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, In 2021, Dr. Shirley N. Weber became the first African American to serve as Secretary of State in California; and

WHEREAS, Despite over 50 years of progress, African Americans continue to face racial and social injustices, voter suppression, economic stagnation, and voting barriers in jurisdictions with a history of discrimination; and

WHEREAS, To build a stronger and more cohesive state and nation, we must continue to help advance the cause of voter equality and equal access to the political process for all people in order to protect the rights of every American; and, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature takes great pleasure in recognizing February 2021 as Black History Month, urges all citizens to join in celebrating the accomplishments of African Americans during Black History Month, and encourages the people of California to recognize the many talents of African Americans and the achievements and contributions they make to their communities to create equity and equality for education, economics, and social justice; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature recognizes the significance in protecting citizens' right to vote and remedying racial discrimination in voting; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.