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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Black History Month is an annual celebration which recognizes that, beginning with the Emancipation Proclamation and continuing with the Civil Rights Movement, African Americans have made great strides and advancements toward equality; and

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

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

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

1 are documented during Black History Month, many communities
2 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 many conditions, including inequalities in access
7 to 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, Black leaders in Illinois are not alone in
15 recognizing that these broad social problems often strike the
16 hardest in the black community; it is painful for black leaders
17 to ponder the stories of human struggle, despair, and hurt that
18 all too often over shadow the stories of success and hope; and

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

1 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
2 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
3 we celebrate Black History Month and recognize how far African
4 Americans have come; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That we acknowledge the continuing struggles of
6 those within the African American communities of the State and
7 the country and encourage Governor Pritzker to address the
8 ongoing issues affecting those communities; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
10 delivered to Governor Pritzker.