



2023 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 120

February 19, 2024 - Introduced by Senators L. JOHNSON, CARPENTER, AGARD, LARSON, ROYS, SPREITZER, SMITH and PFAFF, cosponsored by Representatives DRAKE, BALDEH, MYERS, HAYWOOD, STUBBS, MOORE OMOKUNDE, MADISON, JOERS, GOYKE, RATCLIFF, SINICKI, EMERSON, BARE, O'CONNOR, CLANCY, ANDRACA, SHANKLAND, SUBECK, CONLEY, DOYLE, SHELTON, C. ANDERSON, CONSIDINE, J. ANDERSON, VINING, NEUBAUER, SPIROS, RIEMER, MCGUIRE, PALMERI, HONG, BILLINGS, JACOBSON, SNODGRASS, OHNSTAD and ORTIZ-VELEZ. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

1 **Relating to:** recognizing February 2024 as Black History Month.

2 Whereas, Black History Month provides a deliberate opportunity to reflect on
3 the common humanity underlying all people and to raise awareness and foster
4 respect for the heritage and contributions of people of African descent; and

5 Whereas, this year marks over 400 years since the arrival of enslaved Africans
6 in Virginia. The existence of Africans in North America can be traced back to 1525,
7 and through 1866, the Transatlantic Slave Trade is estimated to have ensnared more
8 than 12 million African people, with an estimated 10 million surviving the
9 unconscionable Middle Passage, landing in North America, the Caribbean, and
10 South America; and

11 Whereas, Wisconsin history first references African descendants in a speech
12 given in 1725 by a chief of the Illinois Indians, in which he said, “a negro belonging
13 to Monsieur de Boisbriant” at Green Bay; and

14 Whereas, on February 12, 1926, noted Harvard scholar and historian Dr.
15 Carter G. Woodson founded “Negro History Week,” and since then, the United States

1 has recognized first Negro History Week and then Black History Month and
2 celebrated the ethnic and racial diversity that enriches and strengthens our nation;
3 and

4 Whereas, both enslaved and free people of African descent have participated in
5 every aspect of America's effort to secure, protect, and advance the causes of freedom
6 and civil rights and have stories that are an inspiration to all citizens, that reflect
7 the triumph of the human spirit, and that offer hope to everyday people to rise above
8 both prejudice and circumstance and to build lives of dignity; and

9 Whereas, people of African descent or African Americans have made
10 measurable differences in their respective industries, such as:

11 1. Elisterine Clayton — 100-year-old Milwaukee resident who, along with her
12 husband Powell Clayton, was a part of building the historic Halyard Park
13 community. Halyard Park is one of the longest-standing African American middle
14 class neighborhoods within Milwaukee. Elisterine owned and operated a series of
15 grocery stores in underserved communities and ensured that residents had access
16 to healthy food options within their neighborhoods. She was a part of a pioneering
17 group that brought Black-owned banks, medical practices, and businesses to the
18 Bronzeville, Chicago, area.

19 2. Torre Johnson, Sr. — Founder of X-Men United and longtime community
20 and youth advocate. Torre was connected to Jeannetta Robinson and Career Youth
21 Development.

22 3. Gab Taylor — Cofounder of Program the Parks and member of Standing Up
23 for Racial Justice. Gab has held activities and programming for youth in Sherman
24 Park since 2016 and fed hundreds of young people from Sherman Park to Moody
25 Park.

