

By: West

S.R. No. 175

SENATE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The celebration of Black History Month in February 2025 provides an opportunity to recognize the rich cultural heritage of African Americans and the significant contributions they have made and are continuing to make in the Lone Star State; and

WHEREAS, An event celebrating Black history was established in 1926 as a weeklong observance by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, an author and scholar whose parents had been enslaved; he sought a means of educating all U.S. citizens about African American culture and engendering pride among Black Americans; the tribute was expanded to a month in 1976 and was officially recognized by President Gerald Ford, who encouraged all Americans to join him "in tribute to Black History Month and the message of courage and perseverance it brings to all of us"; and

WHEREAS, People of African descent have a long history in Texas; in 1528, a Moor named Estevan accompanied the Spanish explorer Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca on a trek across the land that would later become the Lone Star State; by the end of the 18th century, some 450 individuals of African origin lived in Spanish Texas, and in the early 1800s, many African Americans who had been enslaved in the American South crossed the Sabine River, seeking their freedom and settling in East Texas; and

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WHEREAS, In the 19th century, before emancipation, African Americans played an enormous role in producing the state's agricultural bounty and also worked as skilled artisans; and

WHEREAS, Freed of their shackles at the end of the Civil War, Black citizens applied themselves to new realms of endeavor; many moved to urban centers, and in the years that followed, provided labor for new industries that were established; African Americans also excelled in tasks that ranged from ranching and military duty to service as state legislators; moreover, a people who just a few short years before had been held in bondage enrolled in schools and colleges as they sought a path to a better future and a means of coping with the difficult challenges that surrounded them; and

WHEREAS, African American infantry and cavalry garrisoned forts in West Texas during the Indian Wars; known as "Buffalo Soldiers," they patrolled the frontier with the assistance of Seminole-Negro Indian scouts, built roads, and escorted mail carriers; Sergeant Emmanuel Stance, stationed at Fort McKavett, was the first African American who fought in the Indian Wars to be awarded the Medal of Honor; and

WHEREAS, Since the early 1800s, African Americans have been involved in the cattle industry; one of the most famous Black native Texan cowboys was William Pickett, who became a Wild West rodeo performer and who is believed to have originated the bulldogging event; and

WHEREAS, African Americans have been a significant part of the population of Texas for hundreds of years, and the

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celebration of Black History Month acknowledges and promotes the immeasurable benefits of living in a truly diverse society; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the 89th Texas Legislature hereby recognize February 2025 as Black History Month and encourage all citizens to learn more about the history and accomplishments of African Americans in the Lone Star State.