

By: Giddings

H.R. No. 632

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The celebration of Black History Month in February
2 2011 provides an opportunity to recognize the rich cultural
3 heritage of African Americans and the significant contributions
4 they have made and are making to the Lone Star State and the world at
5 large; and

6 WHEREAS, A weeklong observance focusing on black history was
7 established in 1926 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, an author and scholar
8 and the son of former slaves, who sought a means of educating
9 non-black Americans about African American culture and of
10 engendering pride among black Americans; the tribute was expanded
11 to a month in 1976 and was officially recognized by President Gerald
12 Ford, who encouraged all Americans to celebrate "Black History
13 Month and the message of courage and perseverance it brings to all
14 of us"; and

15 WHEREAS, African Americans have constituted a significant
16 part of the population of Texas for hundreds of years; in the 19th
17 century, before emancipation, they played an enormous role in
18 producing this state's agricultural bounty and also worked as
19 skilled artisans; after the Civil War, many moved to urban centers,
20 and in the years that followed, they provided manpower for new
21 industries that were being established; and

22 WHEREAS, African American infantry and cavalry garrisoned
23 forts in West Texas during the Indian Wars; known as "Buffalo
24 Soldiers," they patrolled the frontier with the assistance of black

1 Seminole Indian scouts, built roads, and escorted mail carriers;
2 Sergeant Emmanuel Stance, stationed at Fort McKavett, was the first
3 African American who fought in the Indian Wars to be awarded the
4 Medal of Honor; and

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

9 WHEREAS, In the mid-20th century, African Americans in Texas
10 substantially furthered the civil rights movement by filing and
11 winning lawsuits that outlawed the white primary and that helped to
12 integrate graduate and professional schools; today, influential
13 African American leaders continue to follow in the footsteps of
14 their predecessors, taking their rightful place in the public arena
15 and promoting social justice; and

16 WHEREAS, The contributions of African Americans in the nation
17 at large not only have impacted every facet of life in this country
18 but have had an influence around the globe; among their most notable
19 but perhaps least-known achievements have been advances in science
20 and technology; the long list of those who have distinguished
21 themselves in these fields includes Alexander Miles, who developed
22 the automated elevator door, Garrett Morgan, who invented the gas
23 mask and the traffic signal, Frederick Jones, who developed
24 refrigerated trucks and railroad cars, Dr. Charles Drew, who
25 developed a technique for preserving plasma and who established
26 blood banks across Europe and the Pacific during World War II,
27 saving the lives of countless American soldiers and sailors, Dr.

1 Patricia E. Bath, who developed a method of eye surgery that has
2 helped many blind people to see, and Dr. Philip Emeagwali, who in
3 1989 invented the world's fastest computer; and

4 WHEREAS, The celebration of Black History Month highlights
5 the myriad ways in which African Americans have helped to shape this
6 state and nation over the course of four centuries and acknowledges
7 the immeasurable benefits of living in a truly diverse society;
8 now, therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
10 Legislature hereby recognize February 2011 as Black History Month
11 and encourage all citizens to learn more about the history and
12 accomplishments of African Americans.