

By: Giddings

H.R. No. 513

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, In February of each year, Black History Month is  
2 commemorated throughout the nation, and this special observance  
3 helps focus public attention on the contributions that African  
4 Americans have made to the past development and ongoing progress of  
5 the United States of America; and

6           WHEREAS, The celebration in 2013 takes on further resonance  
7 as it marks the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation  
8 and the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington; and

9           WHEREAS, Those events stand as two of the best-known episodes  
10 in the long history of African Americans' unrelenting quest for  
11 full equality and inclusion; the Emancipation Proclamation, issued  
12 by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, provided a hopeful  
13 sign that the era of slavery might soon be over; before that point  
14 in U.S. history, most blacks were not allowed to live as free men  
15 and women, and yet they played an essential part in building the  
16 nation into a land of prosperity and immense potential even as they  
17 were denied the freedom and equality that were its highest ideals;  
18 and

19           WHEREAS, Freed of their shackles at the end of the Civil War,  
20 black citizens applied themselves to new realms of endeavor; in  
21 Texas, African Americans excelled in tasks that ranged from riding  
22 herd on cattle to manning frontier outposts to serving as state  
23 legislators; moreover, a people who just a few short years before  
24 had been held in bondage enrolled in schools and colleges as they

1 sought a path to a better future and a means of coping with the  
2 difficult challenges that surrounded them; and

3       WHEREAS, The obstacles of segregation, disenfranchisement,  
4 and institutionalized discrimination would persist for nearly a  
5 century after emancipation came to pass, but ultimately the  
6 nation's black residents would come to know the truth of their  
7 rallying cry, "we shall overcome"; one of the pivotal moments of  
8 that struggle came a half-century ago in the March on Washington,  
9 when 250,000 U.S. citizens converged on our nation's capital to  
10 demand change; buoyed by the inspiring words of Dr. Martin Luther  
11 King, Jr., the marchers helped carry forward a civil rights  
12 movement that had been many decades in the making and that had  
13 included important victories by black Texans; within two years of  
14 the March on Washington, the passage of two landmark pieces of  
15 legislation, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act  
16 of 1965, helped the country to take a huge stride toward the goal of  
17 truly offering liberty and justice for all; and

18       WHEREAS, The story of African Americans in America is  
19 integral to the history of this country, and the substance of that  
20 story, now nearly 400 years in the making, is indeed deserving of  
21 remembrance and recognition; now, therefore, be it

22       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas  
23 Legislature hereby commemorate Black History Month in February 2013  
24 and pay tribute to the rich legacy of African Americans in the  
25 United States.