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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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SENATE RESOLUTION

PROCLAIMING FEBRUARY OF 2021, AS "BLACK HISTORY MONTH" IN THE STATE  
OF RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Senators Mack, Quezada, McCaffrey, Goodwin, Coyne, Cano, Pearson,  
Miller, Gallo, and Algieri

Date Introduced: February 23, 2021

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1           WHEREAS, Throughout the history of America, truly significant African-American  
2 contributions to the economy, social growth, sciences, and arts in this great nation have all too  
3 often been ignored. In recognition of this plethora of major accomplishments made by men and  
4 women of African ancestry, the month of February is celebrated as "Black History Month" across  
5 the nation; and

6           WHEREAS, African-Americans were first brought to America forcibly. They were  
7 enslaved, faced inhuman cruelty, and were subjected to injustices beyond understanding. Families  
8 were torn apart, lynching went unpunished, and segregation and denial of fundamental  
9 constitutional rights and protections went on for decades; and

10           WHEREAS, Though these men and women suffered immense tragedies and social  
11 inequalities, they also persevered, and their triumphs and contributions to the economic, artistic,  
12 literary, scientific, and technological advancement of our country are significant and momentous;  
13 and

14           WHEREAS, African-Americans have been an integral part of Rhode Island's social,  
15 political, and economic development from its beginning as a British colony, to its inclusion in the  
16 formation of the United States, to the rich diversity of today's Ocean State; and

17           WHEREAS, From the initial shots fired in the struggle for American Independence, to  
18 the Rhode Island 1<sup>st</sup> Black Regiment's Battle of Newport, to the garrisons of the Rhode Island 14<sup>th</sup>  
19 Heavy Artillery Regiment (Colored) in 1863, Americans of African descent have responded to

1 the call of duty; and

2 WHEREAS, In recognition of the numerous positive and patriotic contributions of  
3 African-American Rhode Islanders in the United States military, we honor their legacy of  
4 bravery, honor, and sacrifice. From the earliest recordation of Black History in our state,  
5 including those of slaves, former slaves, and free men, African-Americans have served with pride  
6 to protect our vital interests and provide for our common defense; and

7 WHEREAS, Structures in the City of Newport, such as the Brick Market, later used as  
8 the town hall and theater; the Old Colony House, which at one time served Rhode Island as its  
9 capitol; and the oldest library in America, the Redwood Library, stand as lasting and beautiful  
10 tributes to the African-Americans who lived in our state and played a major role in the  
11 construction of these magnificent historic structures; and

12 WHEREAS, The United States and particularly the State of Rhode Island owe a debt of  
13 gratitude to our African-American citizens and their forefathers, whose documented  
14 achievements have too long gone unrecognized; and

15 WHEREAS, The theme for this year's celebration of Black History Month is "The Black  
16 Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity." The contributions made by Black Families  
17 throughout our nation's history, both locally and nationally, will be explored in forums and  
18 classrooms, and people will be encouraged to share their personal stories about the importance of  
19 the Black Family in their lives and to the benefit of the wider community; now, therefore be it

20 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby proudly proclaims  
21 February as "Black History Month", and furthermore recognizes and applauds the sacrifices and  
22 myriad of contributions made by African-American men and women throughout this great  
23 nation's history; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
25 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society.

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