



Legislation Text

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Fiscal Note

No appropriation required.

Title

Recognizing February 2018 as Black History Month in the City of Madison.

Body

WHEREAS, the theme of Black History Month for 2018 is “African Americans in Times of War”, which commemorates the centennial of the end of the First World War in 1918, and explores the complex meanings and implications of this international struggle and its aftermath; and,

WHEREAS, the First World War was initially termed by many as “The Great War,” “The War to End All Wars,” and the war “to make the world safe for democracy” which provides the framework for focusing on the roles of African Americans in every American war, from the Revolutionary War Era to that of the present “War against Terrorism”; and,

WHEREAS, war inevitably shapes the many stories related to African American soldiers and sailors, veterans, and civilians and is filled with paradoxes of valor and defeat, of civil rights opportunities and setbacks, of struggles abroad and at home, of artistic creativity and repression, and of catastrophic loss of life and the righteous hope for peace; and,

WHEREAS, the theme suggests that contemporary conditions, past and present, give us cause for to consider the specific and unique issues faced by African Americans in times of war:

- The opportunities for advancement and repression of opportunities during wartime;
 - The struggle to integrate the military and experiences during segregation/apartheid and successful integration;
 - Veterans experiences once they returned home;
 - The creation of African American Veteran of Foreign War posts;
 - The cultures and aesthetics of dissent;
 - Global/international discourse including impact and influence of the Pan African Congresses;
 - The impact of migration and urban development; educational opportunities;
 - The impact on health care development;
 - The roles of civil rights and Black liberation organizations, including the Black Power movement and the Black Panther Party;
 - The roles of African American businesses, women, religious institutions, and the Black press in the struggle abroad and at home;
 - The topographies and spaces of Black military struggle, resistance and rebellion;
 - How Black soldiers and/veterans are documented and memorialized within public and private spaces;
- and,

WHEREAS, these diverse stories reveal war’s impact not only on men and women in uniform but on the larger African American community; and,

WHEREAS, the month of February is officially celebrated as Black History Month, which dates back to 1926 when Dr. Carter G. Woodson set aside a one week of time in February, which 51 years later extended to a month in order to recognize the heritage and achievement of Black Americans,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Madison Common Council recognize February 2018 as Black History Month in the City of Madison and around the United States; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the city encourages the celebration of this month by inviting all residents in the city to learn more about the past and to better understand the experiences of African Americans in times of war and how they have shaped our nation.

To read more about African Americans in World War I: "True Sons of Freedom" by Jennifer D. Keene (January 19, 2018/American Legion Magazine)

<https://www.legion.org/magazine/240774/true-sons-freedom>

"Often forgotten today, these veterans were pivotal figures in the modern civil-rights movement who fought valiantly to break down racial barriers within the military and at home. Returning home with their heads held high, they inspired the next generation of black servicemen to continue the struggle against racial discrimination."