



## 2025 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 10

February 12, 2025 - Introduced by Senators DRAKE, L. JOHNSON, CARPENTER, RATCLIFF, PFAFF, HABUSH SINYKIN, ROYS, WALL, WIRCH, DASSLER-ALFHEIM, SPREITZER, HESSELBEIN, LARSON, SMITH and KEYESKI, cosponsored by Representatives TAYLOR, ARNEY, HAYWOOD, STUBBS, MOORE OMOKUNDE, MADISON, GOODWIN, RIVERA-WAGNER, SINICKI, MIRESSE, DESMIDT, KIRSCH, SNODGRASS, EMERSON, SPAUDE, GUNDRUM, CRUZ, PHELPS, CLANCY, JOERS, TENORIO, HONG, UDELL, BROWN, ROE, STROUD, PRADO, BARE, J. JACOBSON, FITZGERALD, DOYLE, ORTIZ-VELEZ, SHEEHAN, MAYADEV, ALLEN, VINING, ANDRACA, PALMERI, HYSELL, ANDERSON, JOHNSON, MCCARVILLE, NEUBAUER, BILLINGS, SUBECK and MCGUIRE. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

1     **Relating to:** proclaiming February 2025 as Black History Month.

2             Whereas, Black History Month provides a deliberate opportunity to reflect on  
3     the common humanity underlying all people and to raise awareness and foster  
4     respect for the heritage and contributions of people of African descent; and

5             Whereas, this year marks over 400 years since the arrival of enslaved Africans  
6     in Virginia. The existence of Africans in North America can be traced back to 1525,  
7     and through 1866 the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is estimated to have ensnared  
8     more than 12 million African people, with an estimated 10 million surviving the  
9     unconscionable Middle Passage, landing in North America, the Caribbean, and  
10    South America; and

11            Whereas, Wisconsin history first references African descendants in a speech  
12    given in 1725 by a chief of the Illinois Indians, in which he said, “a negro belonging  
13    to Monsieur de Boisbriant” at Green Bay; and

14            Whereas, on February 12, 1926, noted Harvard scholar and historian Dr.

1 Carter G. Woodson founded “Negro History Week,” and since then the United  
2 States has recognized first Negro History Week and then Black History Month and  
3 celebrated the ethnic and racial diversity that enriches and strengthens our nation;  
4 and

5 Whereas, both enslaved and free people of African descent have participated  
6 in every aspect of America’s effort to secure, protect, and advance the cause of  
7 freedom and civil rights, and have stories that are an inspiration to all citizens, that  
8 reflect the triumph of the human spirit, and that offer the hopes of everyday people  
9 to rise above both prejudice and circumstance and to build lives of dignity; and

10 Whereas, people of African descent or African Americans have made  
11 measurable differences in their respective industries, such as:

12 1. Elisterine Clayton — a 100-year-old Milwaukee resident who, along with  
13 her husband Powell Clayton, was a part of building the historic Halyard Park  
14 community. Halyard Park is one of the longest-standing African-American middle  
15 class residential neighborhoods within Milwaukee. Elisterine owned and operated  
16 a series of grocery stores in underserved communities and ensured that residents  
17 had access to healthy food options within their neighborhoods. She was a part of a  
18 pioneering group that brought Black-owned banks, medical practices, and  
19 businesses to the Bronzeville area.

20 2. Paul Higginbotham — the first African-American judge to serve on the  
21 Wisconsin Court of Appeals. He was appointed to the court by Governor James  
22 Doyle in 2003 and was subsequently elected to the court in 2005.

23 3. Marcia Anderson — a retired senior officer of the United States Army

1 Reserve from Beloit, Wisconsin. The first African-American woman to become a  
2 major general in the United States Army Reserve.

3 4. Dr. William Rogers — a historian and educator, who was an integral part of  
4 the formation of the Black Radio Network, was an African studies educator, and  
5 made significant contributions to the study of Black life, civil rights, and social  
6 justice.

7 5. Anthony McGahee — a celebrated gospel musician, choir director, and  
8 pillar of Milwaukee’s artistic and musical community. As the leader of “Anthony  
9 McGahee and Praise Motivated,” he has spent over 27 years inspiring audiences  
10 with soul-stirring performances and a commitment to musical excellence.  
11 McGahee is also a proud member of the renowned gospel group “Ricky Dillard and  
12 New G.” Through his music ministry, he has not only uplifted congregations but  
13 also created opportunities for local artists, mentored emerging talent, and brought  
14 national attention to Milwaukee’s vibrant gospel music scene. His work continues  
15 to leave a lasting impact on the city’s cultural landscape.

16 6. Shakita LaGrant-McClain — the executive director of the Milwaukee  
17 County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), oversees a \$400  
18 million budget and more than 700 employees. She began her tenure with DHHS in  
19 2009 and has held various roles, including program coordinator for the Disability  
20 Resource Center. In May 2020, she was appointed interim director of DHHS and  
21 the Department on Aging, focusing on improving service accessibility. Her  
22 leadership emphasizes racial equity and community connection, exemplified by  
23 initiatives like building 120 homes in the King Park area to promote BIPOC  
24 homeownership.

1           7. Victor and Dawn Barnett — the co-executive directors of the Running  
2       Rebels Community Organization in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 1980, at the age of  
3       19, Victor founded Running Rebels to provide local youth with positive alternatives  
4       to gang involvement, crime, and violence. He began by organizing basketball games  
5       to engage and mentor young people, steering them toward constructive activities.  
6       Dawn Barnett joined the organization in 1996 after learning about Victor's work  
7       and feeling compelled to contribute. She left her job in restaurant management to  
8       become a community organizer with Running Rebels. Dawn and Victor later  
9       married and have since worked together to expand the organization's reach and  
10      impact. Under their leadership, Running Rebels has grown to serve over 2,500  
11      youth annually, offering programs that include mentoring, education, and  
12      community service.

13          8. Dr. Samuel Coleman — a dedicated educator and advocate for equity,  
14      currently serving as the assistant superintendent of instruction for the Oshkosh  
15      Area School District in Wisconsin. Born and raised on Milwaukee's North Side, Dr.  
16      Coleman has devoted over 14 years to better public education and the roles of  
17      government, focusing on advancing equity through advocacy, policy analysis,  
18      strategic planning, and leadership development.

19          9. Gloria Rogers — a dedicated community leader and advocate in Milwaukee,  
20      Wisconsin. She has been actively involved in various initiatives aimed at improving  
21      the lives of residents in her community. Gloria's work focuses on promoting social  
22      justice, education, and economic development. She has collaborated with local  
23      organizations to address issues such as affordable housing, access to quality  
24      education, and workforce development. Her commitment to service has made a

1 significant impact on the Milwaukee community, fostering positive change and  
2 empowering individuals to reach their full potential.

3 10. Minnie L. Sims — a cherished elder in the Milwaukee community, known  
4 for her steadfast dedication to service, mentorship, and faith. Throughout her life,  
5 Ms. Sims has been a beacon of wisdom, guiding and inspiring those around her with  
6 her kindheartedness and resilience. She has contributed greatly to her community  
7 through decades of active involvement in church ministries, local initiatives, and  
8 mentorship programs, particularly those supporting youth and families.

9 11. Dr. Jeanette Mitchell — a passionate developer of leaders in the Greater  
10 Milwaukee Community. She founded the African American Leadership Alliance –  
11 Milwaukee (AALAM), the African American Leadership Program (AALP), and the  
12 Neighborhood Leadership Institute (NLI). She worked for decades in the corporate  
13 sector for AT&T, the nonprofit sector for the Helen Bader Foundation (currently  
14 Bader Philanthropies), and as an elected official on the Milwaukee School Board,  
15 where she served for eight years, including three terms as president.

16 12. Fred Reed — a key member of the NAACP Youth Council Commandos,  
17 Reed was instrumental in the first Black Voter Registration Campaign in  
18 Milwaukee. Throughout his distinguished career, he worked with five Wisconsin  
19 governors and countless federal, state, and local leaders to advance civil rights,  
20 workforce development education, and financial literacy. Notably he has made  
21 national history and played several roles such as in shaping the framework for  
22 Wisconsin's Americans with Disabilities Act, and he worked for 25 years in the  
23 Department of Financial Institutions. Reed has been honored with numerous  
24 awards, including the ACLU's Lifetime Achievement Award and the Milwaukee

1 Times Black Excellence Award, for his unwavering dedication to justice, equality,  
2 and community empowerment.

3 13. Anna Mae Robertson, — a pioneering World War II veteran, served in the  
4 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, the only all-female African-American  
5 unit deployed overseas during the war. Born in Osceola, Arkansas, she enlisted in  
6 the Women's Army Corps in 1943 and was stationed in Europe, where her battalion  
7 cleared a crucial backlog of mail for soldiers, processing over 17 million pieces in  
8 record time. Robertson also worked as a hospital aide while overseas. After  
9 returning to the United States in 1946, she lived in Milwaukee, working as a  
10 nurse's aide and later as a homemaker for her eight children. For decades, the  
11 contributions of the 6888th were overlooked, but in 2022, Robertson was awarded  
12 the Congressional Gold Medal alongside her fellow battalion members. Her legacy  
13 continues to inspire, especially through her granddaughters, who have followed her  
14 nursing path.

15 14. Dr. Dora L. Clayton-Jones — a pioneering pediatric nurse practitioner  
16 and esteemed academic leader who has dedicated over 25 years to improving health  
17 care for youth, particularly those with sickle cell disease. She made history as the  
18 first African-American pediatric nurse practitioner in Wisconsin to be inducted into  
19 the Academy of Nursing and the first to achieve tenure at Marquette University. A  
20 passionate advocate for health equity, Dr. Clayton-Jones actively contributes to  
21 research through the Delta Research and Educational Foundation's 22 Researchers  
22 workgroup and works to eliminate health disparities in underserved communities.  
23 Initiated into Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., in 2017, she mentors others and  
24 leads by example, creating opportunities for future generations of leaders. Her

1 commitment to service and scholarship, combined with her dedication to patient  
2 care, has earned her numerous accolades and continues to inspire her colleagues  
3 and the broader community; now, therefore, be it

4 ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the Wisconsin  
5 Legislature recognizes February 2025 as Black History Month and extends  
6 appreciation to the above-named persons for their contributions to the state of  
7 Wisconsin, the country, and their fellow citizens.

8 (END)