

**REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL**

February 06, 2024

**Proclaiming African American History Month in the County of Los Angeles**

African American History Month, commonly referred to as Black History Month, is an annual global celebration and commemoration of the achievements, contributions, life, and legacy of African Americans. Numerous Presidential Proclamations have been issued, endorsing [themes](#) established by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. These annual themes are established to bring attention to the influence of social movements on racial ideologies, reflect changes in how people of African descent in the United States have viewed themselves, and highlight the aspirations of the Black community. The [98<sup>th</sup> Annual Black History Month](#) theme is “African Americans and the Arts” which serves to showcase the influence of African Americans in visual and performing arts, literature, fashion, folklore, language, film, music, architecture, culinary and other forms of cultural expression.

As early as 1916, distinguished historian, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, documented and published many Black researchers’ findings in their studies of Black life and history in *The Journal of Negro History*. Woodson later encouraged Black civic organizations to promote the achievements discovered for the purpose of raising awareness to the public of the contributions of African Americans. This led to the establishment and observance of Negro History Week by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. The second week in February was chosen for this observance as it coincided with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. The exposure and popularity of

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MOTION

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Negro History Week began to expand across the United States to various educational institutions, schools, and centers dedicated to Black culture. In 1976, President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month as part of the nation's centennial celebration. This national acknowledgment highlighted the importance of not only honoring the history and accomplishments of African Americans but also expanding the scope of this observance beyond educational institutions.

This month, we celebrate the contributions of African Americans and acknowledge the continued struggle for equity, access, investment, and redress for systemic harm. In Los Angeles County (County), African Americans were among the founding settlers of the city, and figures like Pio Pico, California's last governor under Mexican rule, had Spanish, Native American, and African ancestry. With each passing generation, the racially restrictive housing covenants dictated where African Americans and other people of color could reside, attend school, or use public facilities. African Americans have continued to experience racial discrimination and hate in the County. From 2021 to 2022, anti-Black hate crimes rose 34% in [the County](#) although African Americans only comprise about 9% of the County population. Likewise, there was an overall increase in hate across the County. In 2022, hate crimes rose from 790 to 929, which is an 18% increase with most hate crimes being related to race, sexual orientation and identity, and religion. Anti-Latino/a crimes rose 3%, sexual orientation crimes rose 18%, and religious crimes spiked 41%: these crimes continue to trend upward. The increase in hate crimes and incidents is indicative of our collective responsibility to build spaces to learn and engage each other in a meaningful way.

Our history provides valuable knowledge and offers lessons from past mistakes, enabling us to build a more just and equitable society. Therefore, it is crucial to take the time to learn the history of African Americans, to celebrate their achievements, honor individuals and organizations, and understand the challenges the community continues to experience. It is imperative to recognize the legacy of discriminatory covenants, address disparities in health, education, and economics, and work collectively to overcome these barriers.

**I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Proclaim February 2024 as "African American History Month" throughout Los Angeles County.
2. Encourage all Los Angeles County department heads to highlight and acknowledge notable African Americans who have contributed to their respective professions, in the month of February.
3. Recognize the Los Angeles County African American Employees Association (~~Association~~) LACAAEA, whose motto is "Elevate, Educate, Empower," for the dedication and commitment of its members in providing essential services to all County residents, especially during challenging times. Additionally, commend LACAAEA for its year-round programs aimed at enhancing the professional development of its members.
4. Encourage all residents of Los Angeles County to gain further knowledge of African American history by accessing online resources and programs, available through the County's Public Library and other library systems, including the National Archives; and to explore ways to engage African American community-based service organizations and historically Black colleges and universities.
5. Direct the Executive Director of the Human Relations Commission (HRC) in collaboration with any relevant County departments, County employee associations, and community-based organizations to report back, in writing, in 30 days, on the feasibility of implementing an anti-Black hate campaign to combat the anti-Black hate in Los Angeles County.
6. Direct the Executive Director of Anti-Racism, Diversity, & Inclusion Initiative (ARDI) and the Director of the Department of Human Resources in collaboration with the Chief Executive Officer, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, HRC, and relevant community based organizations, to create and produce training videos for Los Angeles County personnel and for local law enforcement agencies to educate and promote culturally sensitive anti-Black hate prevention methods and responses, including resources and tactics for

increased safety for victims and bystanders. This work should coordinate with and build on other existing efforts by ARDI and HRC to combat identity-based hate impacting communities across the County.

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(RM/SL:NR)