

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

February 3, 2026

Proclaiming Black History Month in the County of Los Angeles

February 2026 marks a historic 100-year milestone for organized Black history recognitions in the United States. The first commemoration was named “Negro History Week” in 1926 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson through the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH).¹ The 2026 theme, “A Century of Black History Commemorations,” uplifts the contributions of activists, laborers, grassroots organizers, scholars, and artists who preserved essential stories for the benefit of future generations.²

Preserving the truth about the achievements and struggles of Black Americans has never been more important. Attempts to falsify the historical record are not harmless. Recent efforts to ban books by Black authors; delete public datasets, like data for sickle cell disease and maternal mortality; or revise regulatory standards, like federal anti-discrimination rules, have made it possible to justify the dismantling and attacking of the protections and resources of Black Americans.³

In many ways, these efforts are a direct attack on Black history and culture,

¹ Link: <https://asalh.org/black-history-month/about/>

² Link: <https://asalh.org/black-history-themes/>

³ Link 1: [America stares down erasure of Black history and progress](#)

Link 2: [DOJ rolls back anti-discrimination rules - POLITICO](#)

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including through the defunding of institutions that record and preserve it. In the wake of anti-Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) campaigns, many Black-led non-profits have suffered a major loss of corporate and federal funding. This includes organizations like the Fearless Fund which lost 17 of its 20 corporate sponsors largely due to a lawsuit from a conservative legal activist.⁴ In addition to declining representation among journalists, certain segments of Black-led press outlets have reportedly lost 80 percent of their advertising revenue in the past year.⁵ Los Angeles County non-profits have not been immune: cultural organizations like Destination Crenshaw and Invertigo Dance Theatre have reported losing federal funding, impacting staff and programs.⁶

Concerningly, numerous corporations have reportedly pulled back their support for Juneteenth festivals. This includes Verizon and Amazon, which previously sponsored events in California and Colorado until 2024. This was often part of a broader response to anti-DEI pressures, with Amazon ending its DEI programs and removing language from its website about support for "Equity for Black people."⁷ Verizon ended its support for a festival in Santa Clara County, a move that some claim is part of an effort to win Federal Communications Commission approval for its bid to acquire Frontier Communications.⁸ Cisco and Chevron had previously sponsored local Juneteenth events before quietly pulling their support last year.⁹ This loss comes in addition to other funding cuts that led to the cancellation of Juneteenth events in Arizona, Colorado, and West Virginia.¹⁰ To avoid potentially jeopardizing future funding opportunities, many Black-led organizations have opted not to report the loss of corporate sponsors. As a result, the total loss of private funding for the sector is likely much larger than what is publicly known.

Luckily, some businesses stepped up as others sought to avoid scrutiny from the

⁴ Link: [One Year Following DEI Lawsuit Settlement, Fearless Fund Launches New Initiative - AfroTech | AfroTech](#)

⁵ Link: [In Anti-DEI Era, Black Press Loses 80% of Revenue - journal-isms.com](#)

⁶ Link 1: [California nonprofits keep losing funding in what new study calls 'the shadow of the pandemic cliff' - The Art Newspaper - International art news and events](#)

Link 2: [Determined to Continue: Los Angeles Companies and Artists Respond to the Devastating Cuts to the NEA | L.A. Dance Chronicle](#)

⁷ Link: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2025/01/10/amazon-removes-black-trans-rights/>

⁸ Link: <https://popular.info/p/verizon-and-amazon-cancel-support>

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Link: <https://apnews.com/article/juneteenth-trump-diversity-e441197492e4360f3b7a8cbbc00b5c79>

federal government and anti-DEI activists. The Citadel Mall in Colorado Springs allowed the city's festival to hold its event in their parking lot for free.¹¹ In addition, Coors Light and Xcel Energy maintained their support of Denver's festival despite concerns about such a decision being perceived as support for "DEI."¹² Other businesses have also maintained their support for similar events, including Comcast/Xfinity which continues to sponsor the Black Joy Parade in Oakland.¹³

In the face of these fiscal headwinds, organizations like the Black Equity Collective have attempted to pivot by focusing their message on the economic value of Black-led non-profits.¹⁴ And while the California Black Freedom Fund initially launched in response to the murder of George Floyd, many donors now view its "sovereign sustainability" campaign as a way to buffer the impact of shifting government policies and priorities. Despite the short-term recovery these efforts may achieve, they are unlikely to adequately solve the loss of systemic investment. Advocates continue to push for the federal government and private sector to restore the funding and protections that sustain cultural infrastructure.

Despite the major setbacks of the past year, we can find hope in the work of dedicated individuals who actively resisted the erasure of Black history, often over the course of multiple decades.

History does not survive on its own. Researchers and historians across media, academic, cultural, and other institutions brought back Onesimus' contributions to life-saving smallpox work which was obscured, in part, by the racial prejudice of the medical community at the time.¹⁵ Bayard Rustin's role in orchestrating the March on Washington remained largely unknown until film makers, advocates, and his life partner told his story through archives and films.¹⁶ Gwen James critically rescued, from obscurity, the

¹¹ Link: [Juneteenth Festival to be held at Citadel Mall](#)

¹² Link: <https://popular.info/p/verizon-and-amazon-cancel-support>

¹³ Link: [Sponsored: Black Joy Parade uplifts Oakland and celebrates activists | KRON4](#)

¹⁴ [Funding inequities threaten Black-led nonprofits](#)

¹⁵ Link 1: [How an Enslaved African Man in Boston Helped Save Generations from Smallpox | HISTORY](#)

Link 2: [Onesimus' Story: How an Enslaved Man Helped Boston Battle a Devastating Disease – NBC Boston](#)

¹⁶ Link 1: [Troublemaker for Justice: The Story of Bayard Rustin, the Man Behind the March on Washington - Zinn Education Project](#)

Link 2: [Bayard Rustin Queer History Archive](#)

contributions of her sorority sister, Dr. Gladys West, in developing Global Positioning System (also known as “GPS”) technology by pitching a story that eventually made national news.¹⁷ The architectural contributions of Paul R. Williams – who designed the LAX Theme Building and the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Building – may have been lost to history if not for years of family preservation and public restoration by the Getty Museum and the University of Southern California.¹⁸ Historical accounts of the founding of Los Angeles may have left out the contributions of the members of Los Pobladores who had African ancestry if not for the advocacy of Miriam Matthews, California's first college-trained Black librarian.¹⁹

Not only have these efforts helped to correct the historical record; they have helped historians tell a more complete story about the contributions of Black Americans. This year, we celebrate not just those whose contributions went unrecognized for so long, but the individuals who courageously resisted their erasure.

Angelenos have many ways to celebrate Black history – also known as American history – not just during the month of February, but throughout the year. The County of Los Angeles and its partners will host many events and exhibitions which can be found in Attachment A.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Proclaim the month of February as Black History Month in Los Angeles County (County) and encourage all residents to celebrate the history, legacy, and contributions made by Black Americans, and to continue the pursuit of equality and justice for all.
2. Instruct the Chief Executive Officer, through the Public Information Office, to work with County departments in promoting Black History Month events hosted by County departments, including events being co-hosted by County departments and non-profit partners. This should include working with Black-led media organizations, including radio, newspapers, and social media.

¹⁷ Link: [Gladys West's work on GPS 'would impact the world' | AP News](#)

¹⁸ Link 1: [Architect Paul Revere Williams' Archive Finds Home at USC and Getty](#)
Link 2: [Architect Who Helped Shaped L.A. Left Local Legacy - Topanga New Times](#)

¹⁹ Link: [The Black founders of Los Angeles you may not be aware of | LAist](#)

3. Encourage all residents of the County to celebrate Black history by accessing programs and events available through the County's Public Library, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and Natural History Museum.

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ATTACHMENT A

Black History Events

Angelenos can celebrate Black history by attending the following events and exhibitions which are hosted by County departments and their partners:

History of Blues

Tuesday, February 3rd, 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Lawndale Library

[Event Website](#)

Hosted by **LA County Library**.

Participants will explore the origins of the blues and the lasting influences the style has on music today and introduce some of the legendary artists who pioneered the genre. This program is for adults.

Tactile Artist Workshop (Kara Walker)

Wednesday, February 4th, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Pico Rivera Library

[Event Website](#)

Hosted by **LA County Library**.

This workshop uses the silhouette art of Kara Walker to teach participants how to confront the "visual truth" of the Black experience, specifically challenging the sanitized and erased imagery of the Antebellum South.

"Our Place in the Sun" (Resilience & Space)

Wednesday, February 11th, 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Woodcrest Library

[Event Website](#)

Hosted by **LA County Library**.

Learn the places and spaces that existed for African American families to rest, relax, & be their full human selves. Afterwards, honor these spaces, create your own Black Beaches Bag. For ages 18+.

Innovator Spotlight (Garrett Morgan)

Friday, February 13th, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Claremont Library

[Event Website](#)

Hosted by **LA County Library**.

This session celebrates the Black industrial genius of the inventor of the gas mask and

traffic signal, reclaiming a narrative of innovation often omitted from commercial records.

LA Black History Month Festival

Saturday, February 21st, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

La Brea Tar Pits

[Event Website](#)

Hosted in partnership with the **Natural History Museum**.

This 10th-anniversary celebration affirms the integral role of Black history and culture within L.A.'s scientific and cultural landscape.

2026 History & Heritage

Starting February 1st

[Online program](#)

Hosted by the **Natural History Museum**.

This a year-long initiative celebrates the stories of the diversity of Los Angeles and its people through the lens of the beverages and their significant vessels that bring us together. Their first feature highlights two Black-owned businesses: South LA Cafe and Simply Wholesome.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art Exhibits

County residents under the age of 17 can sign up for a [free LACMA membership](#), allowing them to visit LACMA, and bring one guest of any age, for free. In addition, County residents can visit LACMA [for free](#) on the following days (be sure to bring valid identification):

- Free [Museum Day](#) – February 22nd, 2026, 10 AM – 7 PM
- After 3 PM on Mondays – Fridays

The following LACMA exhibits are on display at LACMA and other locations as noted for each below:

Tavares Strachan: The Day Tomorrow Began

Now until March 29th, 2026

LACMA

[Exhibition Website](#)

An immersive multisensory exhibition spotlighting Tavares Strachan's excavation of invisible histories, honoring marginalized Black figures, such as Andrea Motley Crabtree, the first Black female deep-sea diver in the U.S. military.

Fútbol Is Life: Animated Sportraits by Lyndon J. Barrois, Sr.

February 15–July 12, 2026

LACMA
[Exhibition Website](#)

Celebrating the arrival of the World Cup in Los Angeles, *Fútbol Is Life* presents works by award-winning animator and visual-effects artist Lyndon J. Barrois, Sr. Crafted from gum wrappers, glue, paint, and other materials, his miniature “sportraits” capture iconic moments in women’s and men’s soccer.

Mark Bradford’s 150 Portrait Tone

On permanent display

LACMA
[Website](#)

This mural-size composition contains elements of both abstraction and realism and is based on an idea for a work that the artist conceived after the fatal shooting of Philando Castile by a police officer in Saint Paul, Minnesota, in July 2016.

Imagining Black Diasporas: 21st-Century Art and Poetics

Now until July 27th, 2026

LACMA
[Exhibition Website](#)

Features 60 contemporary artists from Africa, Europe, and the Americas, examining nearly 25 years of Black artistic production. This exhibit explores the aesthetic connections and diverse identities within the global Black diaspora.

Act on It! Artists, Community, and the Brockman Gallery

February 15–June 7, 2026

California State University, Dominguez Hills University - Art Gallery
[Exhibit Website](#)

Act on It! brings together works by artists who exhibited at the Brockman Gallery (1967–90), which served as a critical nexus for emerging artists of color and contributed to a growing network of Black-run spaces and collections.