

# HOUSE RESOLUTION NO.141

Reps. Gay-Dagnogo, Rabhi, Tate, Cynthia Johnson, Cherry, Love, Pohutsky, Shannon, Sowerby, and Stone offered the following resolution:

1       A resolution to honor 400 years of African American heritage  
2 in the United States of America.

3       Whereas, The 100th Michigan Legislature recognizes, honors,  
4 and acknowledges 400 years of African-American heritage in the  
5 United States of America; and

6       Whereas, The Africans who came to Virginia in 1619 had been  
7 taken from West Central Africa; and

8       Whereas, Africans were first brought involuntarily to the  
9 shores of America, as the first Africans arrived in Virginia  
10 because of the transatlantic slave trade; and



1       Whereas, The Africans were sold into bondage despite Virginia  
2       having no clear-cut laws sanctioning slavery. Across three and a  
3       half centuries—from 1501 to 1867—more than 12.5 million Africans  
4       were captured, sold, and transported to the Americas. The English  
5       ship, *White Lion*, arrived at Point Comfort, or present-day Hampton,  
6       Virginia, toward the end of August 2019. John Rolfe, a prominent  
7       planter and merchant, reported that “20. and odd Negroes” were  
8       “bought for victuals.”; and

9       Whereas, The majority of Africans were acquired by wealthy and  
10      well-connected English planters including Governor Sir George  
11      Yeadley and the cape, or head, merchant, Abraham Piersey. It is  
12      estimated that during the 300 years of the transatlantic slave  
13      trade, between 12 million and 20 million Africans were transported  
14      to the Americas as slaves. Of these, more than 400,000 were sent to  
15      the 13 British colonies and, later, the United States. Current  
16      estimates hold that more than 1 million Africans died on these  
17      journeys; and

18      Whereas, Uncompensated labor served as a major foundation upon  
19      much of the wealth found in the United States. By 1840, slave-  
20      labor-produced cotton was 59 percent of United States exports and  
21      became a driving force behind the Industrial Revolution. The  
22      profits, while beginning from forced labor in the south, spread  
23      across the nation as ports and merchants carried the product of the  
24      labor. The extraction and accumulation of wealth from enslaved  
25      Africans has created a direct, measurable economic disparity with  
26      modern impact estimates ranging in the trillions. Enslaved Africans  
27      laid the literal cornerstones of American institutions, such as the  
28      U.S. Capitol Building, White House, Wall Street, and numerous  
29      prominent universities; and

1       Whereas, Throughout the entire history of African-American  
2 heritage, African-Americans not only persevered, African-Americans  
3 thrived and successfully contributed to every aspect of American  
4 society. Four hundred years after the first Africans were brought  
5 to America against their will, African-Americans have proudly  
6 volunteered in every American war, from the Revolutionary War to  
7 the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some of the most  
8 successful business people, astronauts, athletes, leaders and a  
9 President are African-Americans who are direct descendants of the  
10 original Africans brought to this country as slaves; and

11       Whereas, Throughout perilous sacrifices, African American  
12 citizens continue to contribute to the strength, will, history, and  
13 culture of the United States; now, therefore, be it

14       Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of  
15 this legislative body honor 400 years of African-American heritage  
16 in the United States of America.