WHEREAS, Throughout the history of America, truly significant African-American contributions to the economy, social growth, sciences, and arts in this great nation have all too often been ignored. In recognition of this plethora of major accomplishments made by men and women of African ancestry, the month of February is celebrated as "Black History Month" across the nation; and

WHEREAS, African-Americans were first brought to America forcibly. They were enslaved, faced inhuman cruelty, and were subjected to injustices beyond understanding. Families were torn apart, lynching went unpunished, and segregation and denial of fundamental constitutional rights and protections went on for decades; and

WHEREAS, Though these men, women and children suffered immense tragedies and social inequalities, they also persevered, and their triumphs and contributions to the economic, artistic, literary, scientific, and technological advancement of our country are significant and momentous; and

WHEREAS, African-Americans have been an integral part of Rhode Island's social, political, and economic development from its beginning as a British colony, to its inclusion in the formation of the United States, to the rich diversity of today's Ocean State; and

WHEREAS, The systemic gaps that exist and continue to prevent the Black community from creating generational wealth, for example, the existing home ownership gap between the African-American community and the rest of American society must be recognized; and
WHEREAS, The United States and particularly the State of Rhode Island owe a debt of gratitude to our African-American citizens and their forefathers, whose documented achievements have too long gone unrecognized; and

WHEREAS, The theme for this year's celebration of Black History Month is “Black Health and Wellness.” This theme resonates for many given the current Covid-19 Pandemic and the racial disparities that exist within America Healthcare. Observances throughout the month of February will honor Black health pioneers such as Daniel Hale Williams, a renowned cardiologist who performed the world's first successful open heart surgery in 1893, and Rebecca Lee Crumpler, who in 1864 became the first Black woman in the United States to receive a medical degree. Also, communities are being encouraged to honor and recognize the many doulas, midwives, naturopaths, herbalists, and others who have worked tirelessly to improve the health and well-being of Black Americans; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby proudly proclaims February as "Black History Month", and furthermore recognizes and applauds the sacrifices and myriad contributions made by African-American men and women throughout this great nation's history; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society.