

1           A RESOLUTION honoring the celebration of Black History Month and recognizing  
2 that Black history is American history.

3           WHEREAS, in 1776, people envisioned the United States as a new nation dedicated  
4 to the proposition, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, that "all men are created  
5 equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among  
6 these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness"; and

7           WHEREAS, Africans were first brought involuntarily to the shores of the United  
8 States as early as the 17th century; and

9           WHEREAS, African Americans suffered enslavement and subsequently faced the  
10 injustices of lynch mobs, segregation, and the denial of the basic and fundamental rights  
11 of citizenship; and

12           WHEREAS, in 2022, the vestiges of those injustices and inequalities remain  
13 evident in the society of the United States; and

14           WHEREAS, in the face of injustices, people of good will and of all races in the  
15 United States have distinguished themselves with a commitment to the noble ideals of  
16 which the United States was founded and have fought courageously for the rights and  
17 freedoms of African Americans and others; and

18           WHEREAS, during the month of February 2022, across the United States of  
19 America and this great Commonwealth, observances are held to increase public  
20 awareness of the importance of Black history and the contributions that African  
21 Americans have made toward this county; and

22           WHEREAS, in 2022, the Kentucky Black Legislative Caucus and all Kentuckians  
23 pause to recognize and reflect on the accomplishments African Americans have made in  
24 this Commonwealth and across the nation throughout each year, and throughout the  
25 history of this nation, and in so doing we commemorate our annual Black History  
26 Celebration; and

27           WHEREAS, the keynote speaker at this year's Black History Celebration is

1 Raymond C. Pierce. Mr. Pierce serves as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the  
2 Southern Education Foundation (SEF), where he leads the organization's historic mission  
3 of advancing educational opportunities for African American and low-income students in  
4 the southern states; and

5 WHEREAS, since joining SEF in January 2018, Mr. Pierce has focused the  
6 organization on policy research, education legislation, and leadership development. SEF  
7 also launched a workforce development initiative and is expanding its efforts for  
8 strengthening parental engagement in support of improving student learning; and

9 WHEREAS, prior to joining SEF, Mr. Pierce was dean of the North Carolina  
10 Central University School of Law, and earlier served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the  
11 United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights during the administration  
12 of President Bill Clinton; and

13 WHEREAS, Mr. Pierce has served on the Council of Legal Education of the  
14 American Bar Association and is a past Vice President of the North Carolina Bar  
15 Association; and

16 WHEREAS, Mr. Pierce earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Syracuse  
17 University, a Juris Doctor degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Law,  
18 and Master of Arts from the Divinity School at Duke University; and

19 WHEREAS, the Senate of the Commonwealth of Kentucky is honored to host  
20 Raymond C. Pierce as the keynote speaker for the annual Black History Celebration; and

21 WHEREAS, we all recognize that Black history is American history; and

22 WHEREAS, not only during the month of February, but throughout the year, it is  
23 important that we know our history to beneficially meet the challenges of now, and, into  
24 the future, we must understand what brought us to this moment; and

25 WHEREAS, the citizens of this great Commonwealth should recommit themselves  
26 to an ideal America where equality and justice will always prevail, and to the principles  
27 of love, wisdom, and compassion toward one another;

1           NOW, THEREFORE,

2   *Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of*  
3   *Kentucky:*

4           ➔Section 1.   The members of the Senate, individually and collectively, hereby  
5   celebrate February as Black History Month, recognize that Black history is American  
6   history, and urge the citizens of the Commonwealth to be mindful of the history, culture,  
7   and profound contributions African Americans have made.

8           ➔Section 2.   The Senate honors keynote speaker, Raymond C. Pierce, and  
9   commends him for his contributions to his state and the nation.

10          ➔Section 3.   The Clerk of the Senate is directed to transmit a copy of this  
11   Resolution to Senator Gerald A. Neal.