

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 8

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY SENATOR BEGICH

Introduced: 1/26/18

Referred: State Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 **Proclaiming February 2018 as Black History Month.**

2 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE:**

3 **WHEREAS** we recognize the strength and value of our diversity as a state and nation;
4 and

5 **WHEREAS** the birthdays of Fredrick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln inspired Dr.
6 Carter G. Woodson, considered the "Father of Black History," to establish Negro History
7 Week, which later became Black History Month; and

8 **WHEREAS** African Americans are woven into the fabric of this nation and contribute
9 to the attributes that make the nation strong and just, despite the nation's history of their
10 enslavement and unjust treatment; and

11 **WHEREAS** the pivotal role African Americans have played in building this great
12 state has been uncelebrated for too long; and

13 **WHEREAS** many African American residents have helped shape our state's destiny,
14 including Blanche McSmith who, in 1959, after leading efforts to advance civil rights in the
15 period leading up to statehood, was appointed the first African American to serve in the
16 Alaska House of Representatives, where she fought tirelessly to end housing and employment

1 discrimination; and

2 **WHEREAS** Mahala Ashley Dickerson, after moving to Alaska to homestead with her
3 family, became the state's first African American attorney in 1959 and continued to fight for
4 equal rights for all into her 90s; and

5 **WHEREAS** our nation was founded on the principle that "all men are created equal,
6 that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are
7 Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness"; and

8 **WHEREAS** we have struggled through slavery, segregation, and racial injustice
9 toward this ideal and are still fighting today to fulfill the promise of those words;

10 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Senate proclaims February 2018 as Black History
11 Month.