

# RECOGNIZING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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(House of Representatives -  
February 22, 2010)

Madam Speaker, I rise this evening in commemoration of Black History Month as we celebrate and honor the tremendous achievements of African Americans.

At no time in history has there been a greater need to rethink the role of government given the current socio-economic conditions of African Americans residing within disinvested communities wrought with:

Poor performing schools that fail to provide African American children the math, science, and reading skills vital to securing jobs in today's global economy;

Lack of access to sustainable and gainful employment to become productive members of society; and lastly,

Lack of self-sufficiency of income and wealth to ensure the well-being of our children and our nation.

In celebration of the resiliency of African Americans past and present, as the Chair of the Child Welfare Brain Trust, I am hosting a forum tomorrow examining the pathways out of poverty.

This forum will introduce a platform to assess the efficacy of human service programs in light of current socio-economic and budgetary constraints at this crucial time in history. As policymakers, we must decide how to address the needs of all American families living at and below the poverty line, of which Black families constitute a disproportionate share.

We will also examine ways in which select federal programs can be realigned to create more interagency cooperation and collaboration, especially in light of current budgetary constraints. Our nation's future depends on it.

As we celebrate Black History Month, we celebrate with a forward focus in addressing the holistic needs of all Americans.