



STATE of MINNESOTA

Proclamation

WHEREAS: Black history is integral to Minnesota’s past, present, and future, shaping our state’s vibrant and diverse identity; and

WHEREAS: In 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a Harvard scholar, established the observance of Negro History Week to inspire schools and communities to organize local celebrations and host performances and lectures; the event was first celebrated during a week in February that encompassed the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass; and

WHEREAS: The Civil Rights Movement highlighted the contributions of African Americans to our culture and society, leading to the expansion of the week-long celebration to a full month in 1976; and

WHEREAS: African Americans have made countless contributions to Minnesota’s economic, cultural, spiritual, and political life in fields including medicine, law, education, politics, business, the arts, and beyond; Black History Month invites reflection on these achievements and inspires a future enriched by their legacy; and

WHEREAS: Minnesota honors its Black trailblazers, including Dr. Robert S. Brown, the first Black doctor from Minnesota; Lena Smith, the state’s first Black woman lawyer; Dr. Richard Green, the first Black superintendent of Minneapolis Public Schools; Neva Walker, the first Black woman elected to the Minnesota Legislature; Sharon Sayles Belton, the first Black mayor of Minneapolis; Melvin Carter, the first Black mayor of Saint Paul; and Nellie Stone Johnson, the first Black woman memorialized with a statue in the State Capitol; and

WHEREAS: Minnesota remains committed to recognizing the generations of African Americans who have fought against adversity, injustice, and discrimination to secure equal rights; and

WHEREAS: Black History Month calls our attention to the continued need to battle racism and build a society that lives up to its democratic ideals; and

WHEREAS: In a time when national and local debates over justice and civic belonging are sharply felt by communities across Minnesota, we must recommit ourselves to understanding our collective past, acknowledge how it shapes present conditions, and work to implement solutions for a more just and inclusive future.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TIM WALZ, Governor of Minnesota, do hereby proclaim February 2026 as:

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

in the State of Minnesota.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Minnesota to be affixed at the State Capitol this 4th day of February.



Tim Walz
GOVERNOR

Steve Simon
SECRETARY OF STATE