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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The State of Illinois, the home state of President Abraham Lincoln, who issued the Emancipation Proclamation 150 years ago freeing black persons held in bondage in Confederate territory and used all the influence of his office to ensure the passage through Congress of the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, became the first state in the union to ratify that amendment on February 1, 1865; and

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WHEREAS, The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in America and states that "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."; and

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WHEREAS, After receiving word that the United States House of Representatives had approved the Thirteenth Amendment, Illinois Governor Richard J. Oglesby on February 1, 1865, informed the State legislature of its passage and urged its immediate ratification on the grounds that doing so was "just" and "humane"; 3 1/2 hours later, the amendment stood ratified by both chambers; and

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WHEREAS, The Thirteenth Amendment officially became the law of the land on December 18, 1865, after 27 states - 19 in

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1 the north and west, and 8 in the south - had ratified it; and

2 WHEREAS, Each February, the nation observes Black History  
3 Month, a time of teaching and learning about the black men and  
4 women who are an integral part of our nation's narrative and  
5 have made outstanding contributions to national life and the  
6 ongoing struggle for freedom, justice, and equality; and

7 WHEREAS, The addition of the Thirteenth Amendment to the  
8 United States Constitution marked a turning point in the  
9 history of American race relations; despite being by no means  
10 the end of discrimination, injustice, and oppression, it  
11 represented the beginning of a road that has stretched from Jim  
12 Crow laws to Brown v. Board of Education to the Selma Civil  
13 Rights March to the nation's first black president and beyond;  
14 therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL  
16 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we designate the month  
17 of February in 2013 as Thirteenth Amendment Ratification Month  
18 in the State of Illinois to recognize the importance of the  
19 Illinois General Assembly's proud vote for abolition in 1865 -  
20 the first in the nation - and this document's vital place in  
21 the annals of black and American history; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That we encourage schools, civic organizations,

1 and other institutions in the State of Illinois, as they  
2 observe Black History Month, to study the passage and  
3 ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, the leaders who  
4 brought the State and nation to this historic moment, and the  
5 effects of ratification on Illinoisans and Americans of all  
6 races.