

Legislation Text

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Recognizing the month of February as National African American Read-In Month, and honoring Dr. Ebony Elizabeth Thomas' Humanizing Stories Project for its work to bring together diverse voices from the world of children's media, literature, and culture through digital advocacy, community projects, and classroom resources.

WHEREAS, The National African American Read-In is the nation's first and oldest event dedicated to diversity in literature. It was established in 1990 by the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English to encourage communities to make literacy a central focus of Black History Month by reading together and celebrating African American books and authors; and

WHEREAS, More than 6 million people have participated in the African American Read-In, with events hosted at bookstores, coffee shops, schools, churches, prisons, homes, and more; and

WHEREAS, American literature lacks a diversity in characters, authors, and storylines, and by focusing on Black literature, students can experience and relate to new stories while also becoming more aware of the different voices in writing; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, leads the Humanizing Stories Project. Humanizing Stories consists of a number of projects, including a Twitter account that promotes children's literature by and about people of color, ongoing relationships with local community groups like the Paul Robeson House and Museum, and support for events like the African American Read-In; and

WHEREAS, Each year, Dr. Thomas researches how race, class, and gender are portrayed in children's literature, and how those portrayals affect children. Every day, Dr. Thomas and her team tweet book recommendations from their @HealingFictions Twitter account. After reviewing those recommendations, Dr. Thomas selects the top picture books, young adult fiction, middle grade fiction, and comic and graphic novels that highlight the best storytelling of the year; and

WHEREAS, Humanizing Stories is celebrating Black History Month and African American Read-In Month by celebrating and highlighting new and classic books from the African American diaspora. Recommendations can be submitted to the @HealingFictions Twitter account; and

WHEREAS, National African American Read-In Month is a unique opportunity for Philadelphia students to engage with Black authors while highlighting the significance of literacy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby recognizes the month of February as National African American Read-In Month, and honors Dr. Ebony Elizabeth Thomas' Humanizing Stories Project for its work to bring together diverse voices from the world of children's media, literature, and culture through digital advocacy, community projects, and classroom resources.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy be presented to Dr. Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, further evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.