

JAKE WHEATLEY, JR., MEMBER
19TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

HARRISBURG OFFICE:
311 IRVIS OFFICE BUILDING
P.O. BOX 202019
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2019
PHONE: (717) 783-3783
FAX: (717) 780-4753



"THE PEOPLE'S OFFICE":
2015-2017 1ST FLOOR, CENTRE AVENUE
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15219
PHONE: (412) 471-7760
FAX: (412) 471-8056

WEBSITE: www.pahouse.net/wheatley
E-MAIL: jwheatley@pahouse.net

House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the House of Representatives

FROM: Representative Jake Wheatley

DATE: January 24, 2011

SUBJECT: Request for Co-Sponsorship- Black History Month

In the near future, I intend to introduce a resolution proclaiming February 2011 as Black History Month in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

First celebrated for a single week in 1926, February was selected in honor of the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Fifty years later, in 1976, to coincide with our nation's bicentennial, the entire month of February was designated "Black History Month" to honor the accomplishments of African Americans across our great country. At that time, President Gerald Ford urged all Americans to "Seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.

This year's theme, "The History of Black Economic Empowerment," pays tribute to Jacob Lawrence, Annie Malone, and the National Urban League for their hard work and successes during times of economic strife.

Mr. Lawrence, an American narrative painter, was best known for his "Migration Series," a moving portrayal of the migration of hundreds of thousands of African Americans from the rural South to the North after World War I. During the Great Depression, he was accepted into the Federal Arts Project, which employed artists to create works in buildings such as hospitals, schools and libraries. He was able to acquire his own studio with the help of a government grant and eventually went on to become a professor at the University of Washington in Seattle.

As a young woman Ms. Malone became aware that there were very few cosmetics available for women of color. She developed her own cosmetics line to fill this void and by 1920 her wealth was estimated at around 14 million dollars, and her accomplishments included the founding of Poro College, the first cosmetology school for African Americans. As a philanthropist, she donated much of her fortune to various causes.

I urge you to join in celebrating Black History Month by co-sponsoring this resolution. I invite you to contact Ms. April Ashe in my Harrisburg office at (717) 783-3783 (inter-office extension 6417) or via e-mail at aashe@pahouse.net. Thank you!