

City and County of San Francisco
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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******* STATEMENT*******

San Francisco Human Rights Commission Speaks to the Significance of Black History Month 2014 and Reflects on the Critical Impact of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on the Observance

The Theme for the 2014 Black History Month Observance is "Civil Rights in America"

San Francisco, CA- On behalf of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC), Commission Chair Michael A. Sweet issued the following statement in recognition of Black History Month 2014 and the critical importance of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that called for eradicating all forms of discrimination so that all people may be afforded equal opportunity and enjoy the freedom to contribute to the vitality of our society as they self-determine:

"Black History Month remains an important occasion as we honor the legacy, contributions and achievements of the African American Community in San Francisco and across our great Nation. Historically, African American people have played a vital role toward the prosperity and evolution of our Country. Overcoming intolerance, social barriers, discrimination and inequality, African Americans continue to enhance and strengthen our Nation's presence in the global economy as catalysts for innovation, progress, and change resulting in a better world for all.

As we commemorate February as Black History Month, it is also essential that we acknowledge the critical role of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its impact toward ensuring that all people may live free of discrimination. As a result of this landmark civil rights legislation, African Americans were amongst other marginalized communities empowered to live up to their fullest potential to make significant contributions to our society for which we all have benefited."

Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history. The Civil Rights Act was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on July 2, 1964. 2014 marks the 50th Anniversary of this law which prohibited discrimination in public places, provided for the integration of schools and other public facilities, and made employment discrimination illegal. This document was the most sweeping civil rights legislation since Reconstruction.

The San Francisco Human Rights Commission was established in 1964 by City Ordinance and became a Charter Commission in 1990. In 2014 the HRC will celebrate 50 years of distinguished public service in human rights advocacy for the City and County of San Francisco

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