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I propose we get together and end Black History Month

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Today, at the beginning of Black History Month, I propose an end to Black History Month.

I propose that, from this day forward, we stop telling the tale of two Americas and instead document and celebrate the full and storied, multicultural and multidimensional story that is America in all of its colors, geographies and passions, in all of its ups, downs and exhortations.

I propose that, for the first time in American history, this country has reached a point where we can stop celebrating separately, stop learning separately, stop being American separately. We have reached a point where most Americans want to gain a larger understanding of the people they have not known, customs they have not known, traditions they have not known.

I propose that this month, 142 years after Congress passed the Reconstruction Acts of 1867 that allowed for the Southern states to be readmitted to the Union, we adopt our own personal reconstruction goals to admit into our lives people who are different, people whose origins differ from ours, people who can teach us so much if we listen.

I propose that this month, we become not the America of Rush Limbaugh or the America of Al Franken, but to become an America where all opinions matter and hope trumps hate.

I propose that this February, we become not an America of black or white or Hispanic or Asian, but an America of black and white and Hispanic and Asian, an America where each of those heritages is a mandatory part of school curriculums.

We don't need more amendments to the U.S. Constitution; we need more amendments to our own personal behaviors, beginning with changing how we treat one another.

We cannot complain about how those outside America treat us if we treat one another worse.

So this Black History Month, 139 years after Congress granted black men the right to vote, 89 years after Congress granted women the right to vote, we can vote to no longer be a fragmented nation.

This Black History Month, we can do more than imagined to honor Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the son of former slaves who is credited with founding Black History Month.

We can do what he wanted and accept American history is the history of all Americans.

We can appreciate that, in response to history textbooks ignoring the story of black Americans, he established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, created the association's Journal of Negro History and founded Negro History Week.

That was 83 years ago, and I applaud Woodson for asserting, in his words, that "the achievements of the Negro properly set forth will crown him as a factor in early human progress and a maker of

modern civilization."

It was 33 years ago that Negro History Week became Black History Month.

It is now time that American history be American history every day, that Americans be Americans all the time and that we stop learning and living and celebrating separately.

I propose that we adopt our own rules to usher in a Second Reconstruction, and through our acts, unite a nation that is closer than it has ever been.

Today, in honor of black history, which is American history, I propose that Black History Month be no more.

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