A Proclamation

Whereas, four hundred years ago, 20 Africans landed at Port Comfort, Virginia as indentured servants; and

Whereas, within 10 years hence, the peculiar institution of slavery had taken hold in the English colonies; and

Whereas, Massachusetts was the first colony to legalize slavery in 1641 and on July 08, 1783, the Massachusetts Supreme Court issued a ruling that effectively abolished slavery in Massachusetts; and

Whereas, the great preponderance of Africans in America were held in bondage until the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1865; and

Whereas, Africans became an integral part of the fabric and great mosaic of America; and

Whereas, an African (Chrispus Attucks) was the first to shed blood during the Boston Massacre and the American Revolutionary War; and

Whereas, Africans fought gallantly in all American wars, as exemplified by the brave soldiers of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment even when many of them had yet to gain their freedom; and

Whereas, Africans made immeasurable contributions to America in the arts, literature, social science, the humanities and their scientific inventions; and

Whereas, the United States House and Senate established Public Law H.R.1242 - 400 Years of African-American History Commission Act on January 8, 2018.

Now, therefore, I, Charles D. Baker, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim that the year 2019 marks:

400 YEARS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN PRESENCE IN AMERICA

And urge all the citizens of the Commonwealth to take cognizance of this anniversary year and to participate fittingly in its observance.

Given at the Executive Chamber in Boston, this eighteenth day of January in the year two thousand and nineteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two-hundred and forty second.

By His Excellency

Charles D. Baker
Governor of the Commonwealth

Karyn E. Polito
Lt. Governor of the Commonwealth

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

God Save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts