



RPNM Statement on the Beginning of Black History Month

February begins Black History Month, and RPNM celebrates by commemorating the significant contributions made by Black Americans within the Republican Party.

Did you know the first twenty-three Black members of Congress were all Republicans?

Hiram R. Revels became the first Black Senator as a Republican in 1870. Despite setting a groundbreaking precedent for civil rights with his election by the Mississippi legislature, Revels encountered harsh opposition in Washington, D.C., from Southern Democrats who opposed his seating in the Senate. On a party-line vote, with all Republicans voting in favor and all Democrats voting against, Revels was officially elected as the first African American Senator.

The Republican Party was founded as the anti-slavery party and fought to abolish slavery in America, a position that was opposed by the majority of Democrats at the time. Here are some more critical historical events spearheaded by Republicans:

- In 1863, Republican President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared freedom to more than three million enslaved African Americans living in Southern states.
- Juneteenth celebrates news of Lincoln's proclamation reaching the residents of Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865.
- In 1865, Lincoln and the Republicans passed the 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery in the United States.
- In 1868, Republicans passed the 14th Amendment, giving African Americans citizenship.
- In 1870, Republicans passed the 15th Amendment, giving African American men the right to vote.
- In an attempt to counter these actions, Democrats, who had regained a majority in southern states, began passing the "Jim Crow" laws that led to segregation and the suppression of Black Americans' voting rights.

Frederick Douglass, who was formerly enslaved only to become the first Black U.S. marshal and renowned abolitionist, was quoted as saying, "I am a Republican, a black, dyed-in-the-wool Republican, and I never intend to belong to any other party than the party of freedom and progress."

Throughout February, RPNM highlights the invaluable contributions made by Black Americans and pays tribute to the brave Black Republicans who fought to lay the foundation of equality, justice, and liberty for all future generations.