Mr. President, I rise to request that for the second year in a row, the US government officially recognizes the last week in March as Black Women’s History Week. During the week of March 28th, 2016, as part of Women’s History Month and in honor of the second year of the United Nation’s International Decade for People of African Descent, several leading social justice organizations will be holding their second annual week of events to honor Black women and recognize their current struggles in American society. This week will shed light on the reality that Black women confront many intersectional challenges in American society, yet their concerns are often pushed to the margins of public attention and intervention. This week marks the perfect occasion to attend to the often hidden experiences of Black women and to generate attention to address the challenges they face.

Black women have traditionally gone above and beyond the call of duty in their contributions to American society. Black women have been inspirational symbols of strength and perseverance through their high voter turnout and historic leadership of racial justice movements. Even in the face of grave oppression throughout our nation’s history, Black women have continued to stand strong and contribute to the well-being of their families, their communities and our country as a whole. Yet at the same time, Black women continue to face undue burdens and obstacles to their own well-being. Acknowledging both the centrality of Black women in our history and social fabric as well as the unique inequalities they face is critical in our efforts to build a society that ensures equality and justice for all.

In conjunction with the congressional declaration, a coalition of organizations advocating for the well-being of women and communities of color will partner to elevate the stories, histories, and realities of Black women’s lives, building off the momentum generated by Black Women’s History Week in 2015. Our charge is to ensure that the lives of Black women and girls are not overlooked, and that efforts to generate information about their well-being is widely shared across public agencies and partner institutions. Thank you.