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Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Frederick Douglass

HON. BILL HUIZENGA

of Michigan

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

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Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of a truly great American, Mr. Frederick Douglass.

Having been born into slavery as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey in Talbot County, Maryland, Mr. Douglass never knew his real birthday. He often lamented that he had only a few, shadowy memories of his mother, who would walk miles at night to visit him as a child, and then walk back home to be in the fields before sunrise. Yet that little boy would grow up into a brave young man, who taught himself to read and write, and successfully escaped slavery on his third attempt.

He would marry Anna, the love of his life, and remain married to her until her death. He was a devoted father to all five of their children. While still a fugitive slave, he would write the first of three autobiographies: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, which remains one of the greatest books ever written in the English language.

Mr. Douglass was a deeply courageous American who never shied away from confronting evil, even at great personal risk. He became a world-renown orator in the cause of abolition, laying bare the horrors of slavery and helping to end that cursed institution in America once and for all. He began and edited his own abolitionist newspaper, *The North Star*. He successfully published his paper until slavery ended, despite opposition and persecution from other abolitionists. He met with and served as an advisor to President Lincoln during the Civil War, and did not hesitate to confront the President directly over the treatment of African American soldiers in the Union Army.

After the Civil War ended, Douglass served four more presidents, fighting to end racial segregation and to get African Americans and women the right to vote. For his entire life, he worked tirelessly to bring justice to the oppressed and to call America to live out its highest ideals, reminding us that "The life of the nation is secure only while the nation is honest, truthful, and virtuous."

I would also like to recognize two great organizations that have been founded to continue Mr. Douglass's legacy of faith-based activism, moral courage and clarity, and family devotion. The Frederick Douglass Foundation was founded in 2009 by Dr. Timothy Johnson, Mr. Troy Rolling and Rev. Dean Nelson to engage and recruit black activists, community leaders to become members of the Republican Party. The organization has thousands of members and chapters in over 15 states. The Douglass Leadership Institute, founded in 2015 by Rev. Dean Nelson, a non-partisan organization which educates, equips and empowers faith-based leaders to embrace and apply biblical principles to life. Both organizations are committed to Righteousness, Justice, Liberty and Virtue.