



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** Res 0804-2003, **Version:** \*

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Res. No. 804

Resolution recognizing the 100 year anniversary of W. E. B DuBois's work *The Souls of Black Folk*, which was published on April 18, 1903, and for the remarkable relevancy of his words that speak powerfully to our current social, economic and political conditions.

By Council Members Perkins, Barron, Brewer, Clarke, Comrie, Felder, Foster, Jackson, Lopez, Reed, Rivera, Sanders, Seabrook, Vann and Weprin

Whereas, W.E.B. DuBois was a scholar, writer, activist and social reformer dedicated to educating, elevating and empowering the African-American community; and

Whereas, In 1903 DuBois wrote *The Souls of Black Folk*, a collection of 14 essays that has been described as a seminal work in African American literature and an American classic, a work in which DuBois proposes that "problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line." His concept of life behind the veil of race and the resulting "double consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others" is an idea that has, in the opinion of some scholars, become a touchstone for thinking about race in America: and

Whereas, This year's March/April issue of *The Crisis*, the oldest African American publication in the country, of which DuBois served as editor for twenty five years, features a very serious and thoughtful commentary on DuBois's 100 year old work by Pulitzer Prize winning author David Levering Lewis, the Martin Luther King Jr. University Professor of History at Rutgers University; and

Whereas, Levering writes: "The Souls of Black Folk contains such an abundance of political and economic relevancy to our contemporary dystopia that William Edward Burghardt DuBois dead seems a more discerning observer than several panels of live television talking-heads combined. One hundred years after its publication on April 18, 1903, his canonical volume of 14 essays remains indispensable not only to an understanding of the history of race and democracy in America, but as a worthy companion to meditations on the global prospects of racial, religious, and cultural comity in this new century"; and

Whereas, Dolan Hubbard, Professor of English at Morgan State University in Baltimore Maryland, writes: "One hundred years later, DuBois's classic has clearly resonated through twentieth-century thought, offering a critical perspective on the political, social and economic barriers imposed upon Blacks in America; and

Whereas One of DuBois's essays, *A Program of Reason, Right and Justice for Today*, further highlights the relevance of his timeless words, and states: "my friends note, an election is coming up. So what? Whether a Democrat or Republican wins, it will be the same old gang. You will have no chance to vote a meaningful third party. You will have no chance to vote for peace or war, for social medicine, housing or decent education...We are ruled by a minority armed with wealth and power. This usurpation we must fight. Heal the sick as a privilege, not as charity. Make private ownership of natural resources a crime. Stop interference with private and personal belief by religious hypocrites....to me this is reason, right, and justice"; and

Whereas, Scholars, teachers, and students of American studies and African American studies agree that *The Souls of Black Folk* remains a critical text in the American understanding of the Black experience, and the genius of its author W. E. B. DuBois; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York recognizes the 100 year anniversary of W. E. B DuBois's work *The Souls of Black Folk*, which was published on April 18, 1903, and for the remarkable relevancy of his words that speak powerfully to our current social, economic and political conditions.

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