WASHINGTON, DC (February 11, 2011) –Rep. Jan Schakowsky's issued the following statement in celebration of Black History Month.

"From Harriet Tubman to Rosa Parks, from Frederick Douglass to John Lewis, the contributions and leadership of African Americans have – and continue to be – essential to the fabric of our nation. As we honor African Americans during Black History Month this February, we also recommit ourselves to defending the very American values of freedom and equality for all.

"We must also recommit ourselves to another American value: shared prosperity. The overall unemployment rate in America is a painfully high 9 percent, but the unemployment rate for African Americans is an unconscionable 15.7 percent. Getting our economy solidly on the path to recovery means paying special attention to the groups who are suffering disproportionally and ensuring that American prosperity is all-inclusive. As we make difficult decisions to get our fiscal house in order, it is paramount that we empower the African American community and other minority groups as we heal the economy and strike out on the path to the President's goal for our nation: to 'Win the Future'."