

Public Law 103-379
103d Congress

Joint Resolution

Oct. 19, 1994
[H.J. Res. 401]

Designating the months of March 1995 and March 1996 as "Irish-American Heritage Month".

Whereas 150 years ago, the blight that struck Ireland's potato crop ("the single root that changed the history of the world"), known as the Great Famine, caused 2,000,000 of Ireland's population to emigrate, mostly to America's shores;

Whereas in 1847 alone, 25,000 Irish immigrants arrived in Boston; Whereas by 1851, the end of the famine exodus, 1,712 emigrant ships had sailed up the Narrows into New York harbor;

Whereas during the "Great Hunger" (1845-1851) more people left Ireland than had emigrated in the previous 250 years;

Whereas within a few years of their arrival in the United States, these Irish immigrants took jobs as laborers, built railroads, canals, and schools, dedicated themselves to help build this Nation, and this same legacy remains a part of today's American mainstream;

Whereas James Smith, George Taylor, Matthew Thornton, and Charles Thomson, 4 of the individuals who signed the Declaration of Independence, were Irish born and 9 other signers were of Irish ancestry;

Whereas Irish-born James Hoban designed and supervised the building of the White House and its restoration after it was burned in 1814;

Whereas more than 200 Irish-Americans have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor;

Whereas 19 Presidents of the United States proudly claim Irish heritage, included among them, the first President, George Washington;

Whereas John W. O'Beirne, Founder of the American Foundation for Irish Heritage, first requested in 1990 that Congress designate March as "Irish-American Heritage Month"; and

Whereas the 44,000,000 Americans of Irish ancestry, like their forebears, continue to enrich all aspects of life in the United States, in science, education, art, agriculture, business, industry, literature, music, athletics, military and governmental service:
Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the months of March 1995 and March 1996 are designated as "Irish-American Heritage Month". The President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe these months with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Approved October 19, 1994.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.J. Res. 401:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 140 (1994):
Sept. 30, considered and passed House.
Oct. 4, considered and passed Senate.