

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 224

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a “Haitian-American Heritage Month” should be established in recognition of the contributions of the Haitian people to the history and culture of the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 17, 2013

Ms. WILSON of Florida (for herself, Ms. WATERS, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. CLARKE, and Ms. JACKSON LEE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a “Haitian-American Heritage Month” should be established in recognition of the contributions of the Haitian people to the history and culture of the United States.

Whereas freemen from the French colony of Saint-Domingue, now the Republic of Haiti, fought alongside the United States Continental Army at the Siege of Savannah in 1779;

Whereas Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, a Haitian, built the first permanent settlement of what later became the city of Chicago, Illinois, in 1779;

Whereas the significant loss of life and financial burden of the failed efforts to quell Haiti's revolution prompted France to sell the territory of Louisiana to the United States in 1803, a territory that now comprises 22.3 percent of the United States;

Whereas, on January 1, 1804, Haiti declared its independence from France to become the world's first Black republic and the second democracy after the United States;

Whereas Major Joseph Savary, a Haitian, was the first Black Major in the United States Army, and led the Second Battalion of Freemen of Color at the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815, under then-General Andrew Jackson;

Whereas, in 1889, Frederick Douglass, the period's foremost spokesman on human rights and prominent leader of the anti-slavery movement in the United States, became the first United States Minister and Consul-General to Haiti;

Whereas the longest occupancy of a foreign state by American troops was in Haiti, circa 1915–1934;

Whereas over 1,000,000 persons of Haitian descent now live throughout the United States;

Whereas Haitians and their descendants have contributed greatly to the arts and sciences, including John James Audubon, the acclaimed naturalist and wildlife artist who inspired the American conservation society that bears his name, and W.E.B. DuBois, the Haitian-American author and political activist, who became one of the most prominent intellectual leaders of African-American society during the twentieth century;

Whereas the close proximity of Haiti to the shores of the United States, in conjunction with the common bond of

mutual values and commitment to democracy, ensures lasting comity of nations and continued trade and diplomatic relations;

Whereas Haiti, the only republic to rise from a successful slave rebellion, inspires pride, solidarity, and self-reliance;

Whereas the last Sunday of May is commemorated in Haiti as Mother's Day;

Whereas the 18th of May is Flag Day, the most celebrated holiday in Haiti, and is observed by people of Haitian descent throughout the world;

Whereas in Miami, Florida, home to the largest Haitian-American population in the United States, there are numerous cultural events and celebrations planned during the month of May to honor Haitian heritage; and

Whereas May is an appropriate month to establish a Haitian-American Heritage Month: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—
- 2 (1) supports the designation and recognition of
- 3 a “Haitian-American Heritage Month”; and
- 4 (2) calls on the people of the United States to
- 5 observe the month with appropriate ceremonies, cele-
- 6 brations, and activities.

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