

HR 9037

2013

House Resolution

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2 A resolution designating 2013 as "Viva Florida 500
3 Year," calling upon all Floridians to recognize and
4 celebrate Florida's 500 years of history and cultural
5 diversity, and encouraging communities and citizens to
6 participate in local Viva Florida 500 events and
7 activities.

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9 WHEREAS, on April 2, 1513, Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de
10 León landed on the east coast of Florida and became the first
11 recorded European to set foot on the continental United States
12 of America, predating European settlement in Jamestown,
13 Virginia, and Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, by 94 years and 107
14 years, respectively, and

15 WHEREAS, 500 years ago Florida was given the name "La
16 Florida" by Juan Ponce de León because of its lush plant life
17 and in honor of Pascua Florida, the Eastertime Spanish Feast of
18 Flowers taking place at the time of his arrival, and

19 WHEREAS, April 2, 1953, was designated by the Legislature
20 as "State Day" in honor of Ponce de León's arrival at La
21 Florida, and

22 WHEREAS, the 500th anniversary of Ponce de León's landing
23 is a fitting time to reflect on Florida's dynamic culture, rich
24 diversity, and economic prosperity, recognizing that five flags
25 have flown over Florida in as many centuries and Florida has
26 been home to Native Americans for at least 12,000 years, and

27 WHEREAS, Florida's landmark 500-year anniversary is being
28 commemorated throughout the state in 2013 with an initiative

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29 called "Viva Florida 500," which celebrates the important
30 contributions of every community to Florida's rich history and
31 diverse heritage over the past 500 years, and

32 WHEREAS, Viva Florida 500 is the centerpiece among several
33 other important anniversaries in Florida, including Pensacola's
34 450th anniversary of the arrival of Spanish explorer Tristán de
35 Luna in 2009, the 450th anniversary of the arrival of the French
36 to Jacksonville in 2012, the 500th anniversary of Ponce de
37 León's arrival in 2013, and St. Augustine's 450th anniversary as
38 the oldest continuously occupied European city in America in
39 2015, and

40 WHEREAS, Viva Florida 500 is a year-long commemoration of
41 our heritage as a state, and Viva Florida 500 events and
42 activities are taking place in all of Florida's 67 counties, and

43 WHEREAS, Florida claims many firsts in the nation and
44 world, including the first free African-American settlement in
45 Fort Mose, the first incorporated black town in the country in
46 Eatonville, the launch of the first man to the moon, and the
47 first domestication of cattle, horses, pigs, and sheep in the
48 nation, and

49 WHEREAS, Florida's 500th anniversary is a unique
50 opportunity to generate cultural heritage tourism, attract new
51 businesses, and stimulate business development, which contribute
52 to the economic vitality and quality of Florida's communities,

53 NOW, THEREFORE,

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55 Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
56 Florida:

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That 2013 is designated as "Viva Florida 500 Year," that all Floridians are called upon to recognize and celebrate Florida's 500 years of history and cultural diversity, and that communities and citizens are encouraged to participate in local Viva Florida 500 events and activities to recognize Florida as the location where in 1513 the world's cultures began to unite and transform into the great nation we know today as the United States of America.