House Memorial

A memorial to the Congress of the United States, urging Congress to annually recognize January 1 as "Haitian Independence Day," May 18 as "Haitian Flag Day," and the month of May as "Haitian Heritage Month."

WHEREAS, the Republic of Haiti, an island nation located in the West Indies on the western third of the Island of Hispaniola, declared its independence from French colonial rule on January 1, 1804, following a slave revolt under the leadership of Generals Toussaint L’Ouverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and Alexandre Pétion, becoming the first and only state created from a successful slave rebellion, and

WHEREAS, Haiti was the first independent nation in Latin America and the first post-colonial independent nation led by blacks in the world, and

WHEREAS, Haitian Independence Day is globally acknowledged and annually celebrated on January 1 as an affirmation of equality, freedom, and the abolition of slavery, and

WHEREAS, the Haitian flag known today, a variant of which first came into use in 1806, is emblazoned with the country's coat of arms and the colors red and blue, adopted from the flag of France, the country from which Haiti gained its independence, and
WHEREAS, General Jean-Jacques Dessalines is regarded as the father of the Haitian flag, known to have dramatically cut the French tricolor with his saber at the May 1803 Arcahaye conference, ripping away the white of the French flag to symbolize an end to European influence and leaving two strips that Catherine Flon then sewed back together: the blue, which represented the former African slaves brought to Haiti by colonial powers, and the red, which symbolized a people of mixed ancestry, and

WHEREAS, the Haitian flag is a definitive symbol of pride for the Caribbean nation, having become the second republic, after the United States, to defeat a European colonial power in the Americas, and

WHEREAS, Haitian Flag Day events are annually observed and celebrated with pride and enthusiasm throughout the United States, and

WHEREAS, Haitian Heritage Month is a jubilant celebration in the United States, embracing Haitian heritage and culture, and

WHEREAS, first celebrated in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1998, Haitian Heritage Month is observed nationwide in the month of May from Florida to New York with parades, festivals, and school activities, and

WHEREAS, the importance of Haitian Heritage Month is exemplified by South Florida Congressman Kendrick B. Meek's introduction of a bill in the United States House of
and the contributor to the betterment and diversity of this country.

acknowledge the positive impact of Haitian Americans in the
descent now residing in the United States, it is important to

WHEREAS, with an estimated 1.5 million persons of Haitian

nationalities and continuous trade and diplomatic relations, and

values and commitment to democracy, ensures lasting continuity of

showers, in conjunction with our country’s common bond of mutual

WHEREAS, the close proximity of Haitian and American

James, and

Frankétienne, and Tony Award-winning actors and singers

author and candidate for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2009,

M. E. B. DuBois; National Football League player Pierre Garçon;

Sable, founder of the City of Chicago; civil rights activist

the accomplishments of such luminaries as Jean Baptiste Portau du

eyevery facet of this nation’s society and the world, evidenced by

Haitians and Haitian Americans have left an indelible mark on

activists, athletes, artists, musicians, and politicians,

WHEREAS, as educators, authors, community leaders,

WHEREAS, the close proximity of Haitian and American

The White House that same year, and

the celebration of a celebration at

congratulate the Haitian-American community on the occasion of

and First Lady Laura Bush’s letter, sent in May 2005, to

a Haitian Heritage Month, by former President George W. Bush

Representatives in 2004 and 2006 to recognize the month of May

and Codings: Words strucken are deletions; words underlined are additions.
WHEREAS, the United States and Haiti share a history of freedom, a common belief in human rights, and diverse, complex, and resilient peoples who have impacted the world through vibrant cultures, democracy, and a wealth of talent and achievement, and

WHEREAS, Haitian Independence Day, Haitian Flag Day, and Haitian Heritage Month are each observed to salute the Haitian and Haitian-American communities and to exhibit appreciation for their culture and heritage, which have immeasurably enriched the lives of the people of this nation, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

That the Congress of the United States is urged to recognize January 1 of each year as "Haitian Independence Day," May 18 of each year as "Haitian Flag Day," and the month of May of each year as "Haitian Heritage Month" and to encourage the people of the United States to observe these occasions with appropriate ceremonies, celebrations, and activities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be dispatched to the President of the United States, to the President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and to each member of the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.