

By Senator Forman

32-2230-98

1 Senate Resolution No. \_\_\_\_

2 A resolution commemorating the Great Irish  
3 Famine and recognizing the many Irish-Americans  
4 and others living in Florida who support peace  
5 in a united Ireland.

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7 WHEREAS, in 1169 Britain invaded Ireland and because of  
8 their religion, language, and race the Irish people were  
9 exploited, discriminated against, and subjugated, and

10 WHEREAS, in 1704 the Penal Laws deprived Irish  
11 Catholics of their civil rights and education, reducing them  
12 to a condition of extreme and brutal ignorance, and  
13 furthermore outlawed their religion and robbed them of their  
14 land, which was the only means of employment, profit, and  
15 subsistence for the people of Ireland, and

16 WHEREAS, in 1845, the year of the potato blight, the  
17 economy of Ireland was artificially designed for sole  
18 dependence on the potato by three million Irish who were  
19 forced to surrender all of their crops to the British  
20 government to be sold for profit, and

21 WHEREAS, Irish Catholics were forced to tithe and  
22 otherwise support the state church, thereby bankrolling their  
23 own oppression, and

24 WHEREAS, between 1845-1850 in The Great Famine - The  
25 Irish Holocaust, over one and a half million people died from  
26 starvation, fever, cold, and execution for stealing food and  
27 approximately two million more emigrated while thousands of  
28 starving men, women, and children were imprisoned or deported  
29 for stealing food, and

30 WHEREAS, sufficient food to abundantly feed every  
31 person in Ireland was exported for profit and starving men

1 were forced to load the cargo ships that would carry away the  
2 food that could have saved their families' lives, and

3           WHEREAS, during the harvest of death and eviction,  
4 members of the British Parliament proclaimed that property  
5 rights took precedence over the Irish peasants' right to  
6 survive and the British official in charge of Irish Famine  
7 relief professed that the Famine was "divine judgment on a  
8 wicked and perverse people" and was an Act of God meted out to  
9 a lazy and indolent Irish peasant population, and

10           WHEREAS, British economists advised against assisting  
11 the Irish agrarian system and the "surplus" population was  
12 urged to emigrate and public funds were used for senseless  
13 projects like building roads that lead nowhere while the  
14 starving Irish were committed to workhouses that were soon  
15 closed, leading to soup kitchens where Catholics were promised  
16 food in return for denouncing their religion, and

17           WHEREAS, many of these immigrants died at sea in  
18 wretched coffin ships or in quarantine camps and were buried  
19 at sea or in unmarked graves while the remaining arrived  
20 without food, clothing, resources, or employment potential,  
21 products of the British immigration projects, and yet their  
22 contributions in industry, labor, arts, education, the  
23 military, and government have not been surpassed, and

24           WHEREAS, because of a shortage of experienced ship  
25 pilots, many more died from shipwrecks, or ironically, landed  
26 on uninhabited islands and died from starvation, and

27           WHEREAS, so unnatural was the concept of emigration to  
28 the Irish that their language had no word for it, the closest  
29 meaning was "exile or one who has been banished", and

30           WHEREAS, in 1847, known as Black '47, British landlords  
31 evicted over 500,000 starving and sick families from their

1 homes without notice by British landlords, for nonpayment of  
2 exorbitant rents, and many of them died from cold and fever,  
3 while their homes and possessions were destroyed to prevent  
4 their further use, and

5 WHEREAS, 150,000 Irish immigrants fought and died in  
6 the American Civil War for a country and cause they hardly  
7 knew, and

8 WHEREAS, historians, philosophers, and humanitarians  
9 agree that we have learned less than we should have learned  
10 from the Great Irish Famine, and

11 WHEREAS, British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in  
12 apologizing to the Irish people proclaimed: "Those who  
13 governed in London at the time failed their people through  
14 standing by while a crop failure turned into a massive human  
15 tragedy", NOW, THEREFORE,

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17 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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19 That the Florida Senate commemorates the 150th  
20 Anniversary of THE GREAT IRISH FAMINE which was a genocide  
21 against the Irish people and joins British Prime Minister Tony  
22 Blair in celebrating the "resilience and courage of those  
23 Irish men and women."

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Florida Senate joins  
25 the four million Irish-Americans in Florida and all Floridians  
26 in the dream for peace with justice in a united Ireland.

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