

By Senator Soto

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Senate Resolution

A resolution remembering Major League Baseball star
and Baseball Hall of Fame member Roberto Clemente.

WHEREAS, Roberto Clemente was born on August 18, 1934, in
Carolina, Puerto Rico, and

WHEREAS, for 18 seasons, from 1955 to 1972, Roberto
Clemente played Major League Baseball for the Pittsburgh
Pirates, and

WHEREAS, as a Spanish-speaking black man, Roberto Clemente
battled against discrimination in America and was outspoken
about the inequities he faced, eventually convincing the
Pittsburgh Pirates management to allow black players to travel
in their own station wagon, and

WHEREAS, Roberto Clemente said that enduring the unjust
racial divide during spring training was like being in prison,
and

WHEREAS, Roberto Clemente's accomplishments as a Major
League Baseball player include 3,000 hits, 4 National League
batting titles, a .317 lifetime batting average, and 12 Gold
Glove awards, making him perhaps the best defensive right
fielder of all time, and

WHEREAS, Roberto Clemente confronted and overcame racism
and language barriers to become the first dark-skinned Latino to
achieve unquestioned superstar status as a Major League Baseball
player, and

WHEREAS, Roberto Clemente's admiration for Dr. Martin
Luther King, Jr., and his participation in the civil rights
movement were spurred by the racism he experienced in the United

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30 States, and

31 WHEREAS, Roberto Clemente was an intelligent and passionate
32 political activist who marched in the protests of the 1960s and
33 spent time with Dr. King when the civil rights leader visited
34 Clemente in Puerto Rico, and

35 WHEREAS, when Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis on April
36 4, 1968, Pittsburgh Pirates All-Star Roberto Clemente was
37 devastated by the news and, with his teammates, persuaded the
38 Pittsburgh Pirates and Houston Astros to postpone their April 8
39 opening day game until April 10 because of Dr. King's funeral,
40 and

41 WHEREAS, during Roberto Clemente's professional career, he
42 saw significant change in both Major League Baseball and
43 American society, and

44 WHEREAS, Roberto Clemente once said, "Anytime you have an
45 opportunity to make a difference in this world and you don't,
46 then you are wasting your time on this earth," and

47 WHEREAS, Roberto Clemente exhibited a passion for young
48 fans, becoming a role model for all players, but particularly
49 for Latinos who played with him and against him, and for
50 generations of players since then who owe him a debt of
51 gratitude that can never be repaid, and

52 WHEREAS, Roberto Clemente was voted the Most Valuable
53 Player of the 1971 World Series and made history by addressing a
54 national television audience in Spanish during the clubhouse
55 celebration, and

56 WHEREAS, on December 31, 1972, the plane carrying Roberto
57 Clemente on a relief mission to provide emergency assistance to
58 the victims of a Nicaraguan earthquake crashed into the sea, and

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59 all on board perished, and

60 WHEREAS, Roberto Clemente was posthumously inducted into
61 the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1973, becoming only the second
62 player for whom the 5-year mandatory waiting period was waived,
63 and

64 WHEREAS, Roberto Clemente was posthumously presented three
65 civilian awards of the United States government from the
66 President of the United States, including the first Presidential
67 Citizens Medal, the Roberto Walker Clemente Congressional Gold
68 Medal, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and

69 WHEREAS, in 2009, the Florida Puerto Rican/Hispanic Chamber
70 of Commerce, Inc., the United Third Bridge, Inc., the Brevard
71 County School Board, and other partners named the largest sports
72 complex in Palm Bay, at Heritage High School, after Roberto
73 Clemente, and

74 WHEREAS, the legacy of Roberto Clemente as a hero of the
75 game and a positive role model extends beyond the island of
76 Puerto Rico and the Latino community, with his most significant
77 contributions to a better world recorded in the history books,
78 not the baseball record book, NOW, THEREFORE,

79

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

81

82 That Roberto Clemente is remembered as a remarkable athlete
83 and human being whose life was a testament of the best that
84 America's "national pastime" has to offer.