



396826

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
03/27/2017	.	
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The Committee on Commerce and Tourism (Campbell) recommended the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Delete everything after the resolving clause  
and insert:

That the Congress of the United States is urged to  
recognize January 1 as "Haitian Independence Day," the month of  
May as "Haitian American Heritage Month," May 18 as "Haitian  
Flag Day," and the month of June as "Caribbean American Heritage  
Month."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of State is



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11 directed to dispatch copies of this memorial to the President of  
12 the United States, to the President of the United States Senate,  
13 to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives,  
14 and to each member of the Florida delegation to the United  
15 States Congress.

16  
17 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

18 And the title is amended as follows:

19 Delete everything before the resolving clause  
20 and insert:

21 Senate Memorial

22 A memorial to the Congress of the United States,  
23 urging Congress to recognize January 1 as "Haitian  
24 Independence Day," the month of May as "Haitian  
25 American Heritage Month," May 18 as "Haitian Flag  
26 Day," and the month of June as "Caribbean American  
27 Heritage Month."

28  
29 WHEREAS, the United States of America has thrived as a  
30 country of immigrants, united by common values and the promise  
31 of a better tomorrow, and

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

39 WHEREAS, Haiti was the first independent nation in Latin



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40 America and the first postcolonial independent nation led by  
41 blacks in the world, and

42 WHEREAS, as educators, authors, community leaders,  
43 activists, athletes, artists, musicians, and politicians,  
44 Haitian Americans have made their mark in every facet of society  
45 and have contributed to the betterment and diversity of this  
46 nation, and

47 WHEREAS, the close proximity of Haiti to American shores,  
48 in conjunction with our common bond of mutual values and  
49 commitment to democracy, ensures lasting comity of nations and  
50 continued trade and diplomatic relations, and

51 WHEREAS, an estimated 1.5 million persons of Haitian  
52 descent now live throughout this nation, and

53 WHEREAS, the United States and Haiti share a history of  
54 freedom, a common belief in human rights, and diverse, complex,  
55 and resilient peoples who have impacted the world through  
56 vibrant cultures, democracy, and a wealth of talent and  
57 achievement, and

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

61 WHEREAS, Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson and Congressman  
62 Kendrick B. Meek, having acknowledged the importance of Haitian  
63 Americans in this nation's history and diversity, have proposed  
64 resolutions in the United States House of Representatives to  
65 recognize the month of May as "Haitian American Heritage Month"  
66 in the United States, and

67 WHEREAS, Haitian American Heritage Month is held to salute  
68 the Haitian and Haitian American communities and to exhibit



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69 appreciation for their culture and heritage, which have  
70 immeasurably enriched the lives of the people of this nation,  
71 and

72 WHEREAS, the Haitian flag known today, a variant of which  
73 first came into use in 1806, is emblazoned with the country's  
74 coat of arms and the colors red and blue, adopted from the flag  
75 of France, the country from which Haiti gained its independence,  
76 and

77 WHEREAS, General Jean-Jacques Dessalines is regarded as the  
78 father of the Haitian flag, known to have dramatically cut the  
79 French tricolor with his saber at the May 1803 Congress of  
80 Arcahaie, ripping away the white of the French flag to symbolize  
81 an end to European influence and leaving two strips that  
82 Catherine Flon then sewed back together: the blue, which  
83 represented the former African slaves brought to Haiti by  
84 colonial powers, and the red, which symbolized a people of mixed  
85 ancestry, and

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

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

93 WHEREAS, from a region that conjures images of a scenic  
94 paradise, Caribbean Americans are as vibrant as the islands from  
95 which they come, possessing a wealth of talent and history that  
96 reverberates throughout this great state and nation, and

97 WHEREAS, emigration from the Caribbean region to the



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98 American colonies began as early as 1619, with the arrival of  
99 indentured workers in Jamestown, Virginia, and since 1820,  
100 millions of people have emigrated from the Caribbean region to  
101 the United States, and

102 WHEREAS, as educators, authors, community leaders and  
103 activists, musicians, and politicians, Caribbean Americans have  
104 made their mark on every facet of our society and have  
105 contributed to the betterment and diversity of our state and  
106 nation, and

107 WHEREAS, counted among the many famous sons and daughters  
108 of the Caribbean are activist W. E. B. Du Bois; Secretary of the  
109 Treasury Alexander Hamilton; the first African American  
110 Secretary of State, Colin Powell; actress Cicely Tyson; actor  
111 Sidney Poitier, the first African American actor to receive the  
112 Academy Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role; author, poet,  
113 and civil rights activist James Weldon Johnson; musician, actor,  
114 and activist Harry Belafonte; athlete Roberto Clemente, the  
115 first Latino inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame;  
116 and numerous others who have displayed great strength and  
117 resiliency while serving as pioneers among the people of the  
118 Caribbean, and

119 WHEREAS, the modern political influences of Caribbean  
120 Americans are evident in the election of a former member of the  
121 Florida House of Representatives, Jennifer Carroll of Trinidad  
122 and Tobago, as Florida's first Caribbean American Lieutenant  
123 Governor; the election of former Maryland Lieutenant Governor  
124 Anthony G. Brown, who is of Jamaican descent; and the continued  
125 representation in local, state, and national governments by  
126 members from the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, Haiti, Jamaica,



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127 and other Caribbean nations, and

128 WHEREAS, in June 2005, the United States House of  
129 Representatives unanimously adopted a concurrent resolution  
130 recognizing the significance of Caribbean people and their  
131 descendants in the history and culture of the United States and  
132 observing the month of June as "Caribbean American Heritage  
133 Month," and

134 WHEREAS, on February 14, 2006, the United States Senate  
135 unanimously passed the resolution, culminating a two-year  
136 bicameral effort, and

137 WHEREAS, since the passage of the resolution in 2005, the  
138 White House has issued an annual proclamation recognizing June  
139 as "Caribbean American Heritage Month," exemplifying the  
140 importance of this observance across the nation, NOW, THEREFORE,