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House Resolution

A resolution recognizing October 17, 2022, as "Jean-Jacques Dessalines Day" in Florida.

WHEREAS, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, regarded as one of the founding fathers of Haiti, is celebrated as a leader who fought for and attained freedom for Haiti's people, and

WHEREAS, Jean-Jacques Dessalines was raised and trained by Adbaraya "Mama Toya," also known as Victoria Montou, one of the fabled "Amazons of Dahomey" (modern-day Benin), who watched over him and taught Dessalines the ways of an African warrior, and was married to Marie-Claire Heureuse Félicité, and

WHEREAS, as a military leader during the Haitian Revolution, after freeing the colony from French rule, General Dessalines proclaimed Haiti as an independent country on January 1, 1804, making Haiti the first independent nation in Latin America and the Caribbean, the second democracy in the Western Hemisphere, and the first Black republic in the world, and went on to serve as the first ruler of an independent Haiti under the 1805 Constitution of Haiti, and

WHEREAS, the Generals of the Haitian Revolution Army proclaimed Dessalines as the Emperor of Haiti in 1804, crowning him as Emperor Jacques I, and

WHEREAS, under Dessalines, Haiti became the first country in the Americas to permanently abolish slavery, and

26 WHEREAS, according to Haitian historical tradition,  
 27 Dessalines created the first iteration of the Haitian flag by  
 28 taking a French flag and tearing out the white stripe of  
 29 material and having a Haitian seamstress, Catherine Flon, sew  
 30 together the blue and red pieces of material to symbolize  
 31 freedom and an end to European influence, and

32 WHEREAS, the Haitian Revolution aided in the expansion of  
 33 the United States through the Louisiana Purchase, France agreed  
 34 to sell the land to the United States, and on November 10, 1803,  
 35 United States President Thomas Jefferson approved and signed an  
 36 act to pay France \$11 million for the "Louisiana Purchase,"  
 37 which doubled the size of the United States for the incredibly  
 38 low price of 3 cents an acre, adding 828,000 square miles,  
 39 stretching northwest from New Orleans to present-day Montana,  
 40 and

41 WHEREAS, Dessalines served as emperor until his  
 42 assassination during a military revolt on October 17, 1806, the  
 43 anniversary of which is celebrated in Haiti as Dessalines Day,  
 44 and

45 WHEREAS, the national anthem of Haiti, "La Dessalinienne,"  
 46 was named in honor of Dessalines as was the city of Dessalines,  
 47 and

48 WHEREAS, there is a strong connection between Haiti and  
 49 Florida with hundreds of thousands of Haitian-Americans residing  
 50 in South Florida, NOW, THEREFORE,

HR 8081

2022

51

52 Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of  
53 Florida:

54

55       That October 17, 2022, is recognized as "Jean-Jacques  
56 Dessalines Day" in Florida.