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House Resolution

A resolution designating May 18, 2023, as "Haitian Flag Day" in the State of Florida.

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 postcolonial independent nation led by blacks in the world, and

WHEREAS, observed every year on May 18, Haitian Flag Day was celebrated secretly in Haiti during United States occupation from 1915 to 1934 and was first celebrated in communities around the world in the late 1990s, and

WHEREAS, the Haitian flag known today, which was officially adopted in 1806 by President Alexandre Pétion, 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 and, according to Haitian historical

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26 | tradition, was known to have dramatically cut the French
27 | tricolor with his saber at the May 1803 Arcahaie conference,
28 | ripping away the white of the French flag to symbolize an end to
29 | European influence and leaving two strips that Catherine Flon
30 | then sewed back together: the blue, which represented the former
31 | African slaves brought to Haiti by colonial powers, and the red,
32 | which symbolized people of mixed European and African descent,
33 | and

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

38 | WHEREAS, Haitian Flag Day events are annually observed and
39 | celebrated with pride and enthusiasm throughout Florida and the
40 | United States, and

41 | WHEREAS, as educators, authors, community leaders,
42 | activists, athletes, artists, musicians, and politicians,
43 | Haitians and Haitian Americans have left an indelible mark on
44 | every facet of this nation's society and the world, evidenced by
45 | the accomplishments of such icons as Jean Baptiste Point du
46 | Sable, founder of the City of Chicago; civil rights activist
47 | W.E.B. Du Bois; National Football League player Pierre Garçon;
48 | author and candidate for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2009,
49 | Frankétienne; and Tony Award-winning actress and singer Nikki M.
50 | James, and

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51 WHEREAS, the close proximity of Haitian and Floridian
52 shores, in conjunction with Haiti and Florida's common bond of
53 mutual values and commitment to democracy, ensures continued
54 trade relations, and

55 WHEREAS, an estimated 1.2 million persons of Haitian
56 descent now reside in the United States, and more than 235,000
57 Haitian Americans live in southern Florida alone, and

58 WHEREAS, Haitian Flag Day salutes the Haitian and Haitian-
59 American communities and exhibits appreciation for their culture
60 and heritage, which have immeasurably enriched the lives of the
61 people of this state and nation, NOW, THEREFORE,

62
63 Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
64 Florida:

65
66 That May 18, 2023, is designated as "Haitian Flag Day" in
67 the State of Florida.