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House Resolution

A resolution recognizing October 17, 2023, as "Jean-Jacques Dessalines Day" in Florida.

WHEREAS, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, regarded as one of the founding fathers of Haiti, was born in 1758, and

WHEREAS, Dessalines served under the command of acclaimed military leader Toussaint L'Ouverture during the Haitian Revolution to fight for freedom from France, and

WHEREAS, when Toussaint L'Ouverture was deported to France in 1802 by Napoleon's forces, Dessalines continued the fight for freedom, and

WHEREAS, Dessalines served as Governor-General of Saint-Domingue, which is now Haiti, and went on to serve as the first ruler of an independent Haiti under the 1805 Constitution, and

WHEREAS, after freeing the colony from French rule, General Dessalines proclaimed Haiti an independent country on January 1, 1804, and

WHEREAS, Dessalines declared himself the first emperor of Haiti in 1804, and

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

WHEREAS, according to Haitian historical tradition, Dessalines created the first iteration of the Haitian flag by taking a French flag, tearing out the white stripe of material,

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26 | and having a Haitian seamstress, Catherine Flon, sew together
 27 | the blue and red pieces of material to symbolize freedom and an
 28 | end to European influence, and

29 | WHEREAS, Dessalines served as Emperor of Haiti until his
 30 | assassination during a military revolt on October 17, 1806, the
 31 | anniversary of which is celebrated annually in Haiti as
 32 | Dessalines Day, and

33 | WHEREAS, there is a strong connection between Haiti and
 34 | Florida with hundreds of thousands of Haitian Americans residing
 35 | in South Florida, NOW, THEREFORE,

36 |
 37 | Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
 38 | Florida:

39 |
 40 | That October 17, 2023, is designated as "Jean-Jacques
 41 | Dessalines Day" in Florida.