

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 480

Recognizing the significance of National Caribbean American Heritage Month.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 7, 2023

Ms. LEE of California (for herself, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. BOWMAN, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. CLARKE of New York) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the significance of National Caribbean American Heritage Month.

Whereas people of Caribbean heritage are found in every State of the Union;

Whereas emigration from the Caribbean to the American colonies began as early as 1619 with the arrival of indentured workers in Jamestown, Virginia;

Whereas, during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, a significant number of slaves from the Caribbean were brought to the United States;

Whereas millions of people have emigrated from the Caribbean to the United States;

Whereas the current population of people in the United States who were born in or have ancestry from the Caribbean is estimated at over 8,500,000;

Whereas, like the United States, the countries of the Caribbean faced obstacles of slavery and colonialism and struggled for independence;

Whereas, also like the United States, the people of the Caribbean have diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds;

Whereas independence movements throughout the Caribbean and the consequential establishment of independent democratic countries in the Caribbean strengthened ties between the Caribbean and the United States;

Whereas Alexander Hamilton, a Founding Father of the United States and the first Secretary of the Treasury, was born in the Caribbean;

Whereas many influential Caribbean Americans have contributed to the rich history of the United States, including Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable, the pioneer settler of Chicago; Claude McKay, a poet of the Harlem Renaissance; James Weldon Johnson, the writer of the Black National Anthem; Celia Cruz, the world-renowned queen of Salsa music; Sylvia Winter, influential feminist, writer, and human rights activist; Cicely Tyson, legendary star of stage and screen; John Russworm, co-founder of Freedom's Journal, the first Black-owned newspaper; Mervyn Dymally, the first African-American Lieutenant Governor of California and first Caribbean immigrant to serve in Congress, and Shirley Chisholm, the first African-American Congresswoman and first African-American woman candidate for President;

Whereas the many influential Caribbean Americans in the history of the United States also include Kamala Harris, the first African-American Vice President; Colin Powell, the first African-American Secretary of State; Eric Holder, the first African-American Attorney General; Karine Jean-Pierre, the first African-American White House Press Secretary; Patrick Gaspard, labor union organizer and social justice advocate; Lieutenant General Vincent Stewart, the first Black director of the Defense Intelligence Agency; Sandra Lindsay, a nurse in Queens, New York and the first person in the United States to receive a COVID–19 vaccine; Robert Rashford, an internationally known aerospace engineer and coinventor of the single person spacecraft; Harry Belafonte, a legendary musician, actor, and activist; and Sir Sydney Poitier, the first Black actor to win the Academy Award for Best Actor, film director, and diplomat;

Whereas Caribbean Americans have played an active role in the civil rights movement and other social and political movements in the United States;

Whereas Caribbean Americans have contributed to every aspect of our society, including greatly to the fine arts, education, business, literature, journalism, sports, fashion, politics, government, the military, music, science, medicine, engineering, technology, and other fields in the United States;

Whereas Caribbean Americans share their culture through festivals, carnivals, music, dance, film, food, and literature, which enrich the cultural landscape of the United States;

Whereas the countries of the Caribbean are important economic partners of the United States;

Whereas the members of the Caribbean diaspora contribute to prosperity in the United States and the sustainable economic development of the Caribbean, and for 30 years the Institute of Caribbean Studies has encouraged the community's civic engagement through research, advocacy, education, and action;

Whereas the countries of the Caribbean represent the United States third border;

Whereas the people of the Caribbean share the hopes and aspirations of the people of the United States for peace and prosperity throughout the Western Hemisphere and the rest of the world; and

Whereas, since the passage of H. Con. Res. 71 in the 109th Congress by both the Senate and the House of Representatives, a proclamation has been issued annually by the President declaring June National Caribbean American Heritage Month: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) supports the goals and ideals of Caribbean
3 American Heritage Month;

4 (2) encourages the people of the United States
5 to observe Caribbean American Heritage Month with
6 appropriate ceremonies, celebrations, and activities;
7 and

8 (3) affirms that—

9 (A) the contributions of Caribbean Ameri-
10 cans are a significant part of the history,

1 progress, and heritage of the United States;

2 and

3 (B) the ethnic and racial diversity of the

4 United States enriches and strengthens the Na-

5 tion.

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