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THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

COMMITTEE REPORT OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION

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**COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES
AND INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS**

Hon. Jimmy Van Bramer, Chair

October 29, 2018

- PROPOSED RES. NO. 203-A:** By Council Member Eugene, Kallos, Lander, Cohen and Constantinides
- TITLE:** Proposed Resolution establishing February 4 as Rosa Parks Day to commemorate the Civil Rights leader.
- RES. NO. 285:** By Council Members Rivera, Miller, Menchaca, Adams, Ayala, Ampy-Samuel, Eugene, Cornegy, Barron and Rosenthal, Chin, Lander, Cohen and Constantinides
- TITLE:** Resolution calling up the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to recognize the historical significance of Roberto Clemente's place of death in Loíza, Puerto Rico, by adding it to the National Register of Historic Places.

RES. NO. 420: By Council Members Holden, Van Bramer, Gjonaj, Ulrich, Vallone, Rivera, Kallos, Lander and Cohen

TITLE: Resolution declaring November 11 as Polish Independence Day in the city of New York.

RES. NO. 421: By Council Members Holden, Van Bramer, Gjonaj, Ulrich, Vallone, Rivera, Kallos, Lander and Constantinides

TITLE: Resolution declaring October 11 as Casimir Pulaski Day in NYC.

RES. NO. 422: By Council Members Holden, Van Bramer, Gjonaj, Ulrich, Vallone, Yeger, Rivera, Kallos, Lander and Constantinides

TITLE: Resolution declaring October 15 as Tadeusz Kosciuszko Day in NYC.

Introduction

On Monday October 29, 2018 the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations, chaired by Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer will hold a hearing to consider Proposed Res. No. 203-A, a resolution establishing February 4 as Rosa Parks Day to commemorate the Civil Rights leader; Res. No. 285, a resolution calling up the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to recognize the historical significance of Roberto Clemente's place of death in Loíza, Puerto Rico, by adding it to the National Register of Historic Places; Res. No. 420, a resolution declaring November 11 as Polish Independence Day in New York City (NYC); Res. No. 421, a resolution declaring October 11 as Casimir Pulaski Day in NYC; and Res. No. 422, a resolution declaring October 15 as Tadeusz Kosciuszko Day in NYC. This will be the second hearing on these resolutions. The first hearing was on October 16, 2018 and witness testimony in support of Res. No. 285, was made in a statement by Bernie Williams, retired major league baseball player and read into the record by Thomas C. Brasuell, Vice, President,

Community Affairs, Major League Baseball.

Background

In recent years, the Committee has focused on creating a comprehensive cultural plan for the City to better understand and resource our cultural activities. One of the major driving forces behind the City's strong programs, however, is our diversity and the culture that people not only create here, but bring to NYC based on their rich histories. The five resolutions heard on October 16 honored that element and background, while recognizing just a few of the people that have helped to create such a strong, diverse and progressive city. They ranged from the heroic Rosa Parks, who famously refused to surrender her seat to a white passenger on a Montgomery bus, and Roberto Clemente, who used his extraordinary talent and career in baseball as a way to help others—especially underprivileged Puerto Ricans—make their lives better, to Tadeusz Kosciuszko, who came to the United States at from Poland in 1776 to assist in the fight for American Independence from England, eventually became Chief Engineer of the Continental Army, and who dedicated his American estate to freeing and educating African-American slaves. Indeed, they represent not only the strength of this city, but of our country.

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Proposed Res. No. 203-A

Resolution establishing February 4 as Rosa Parks Day to commemorate the Civil Rights leader.

By Council Member Eugene, Kallos, Lander, Cohen and Constantinides

Whereas, Rosa Parks, was born Rosa Louise McCauley in Tuskegee, Alabama on February 4, 1913; and

Whereas, As a prominent Civil Rights activist, Rosa Parks was a long-time member of the Montgomery chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and served as the chapter's secretary; and

Whereas, On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks famously refused to surrender her seat to a white passenger on a Montgomery, Alabama bus, which led to a city-wide boycott of buses; and

Whereas, In 1900, Montgomery passed a city ordinance to segregate bus passengers by race, and created a white-only section in the front and a "colored" section for black people in the rear of the bus; and

Whereas, According to the law, no passenger would be required to move or give up their seat and stand if the bus was crowded and no other seats were available, though by custom Montgomery bus drivers adopted the practice of requiring black riders to move when there were no white-only seats available; and

Whereas, While returning home from her job as an assistant tailor at a department store, Rosa Parks and four other African-Americans were asked to give up their seats to white passengers who were standing; and

Whereas, After refusing to give up her seat, Rosa Parks was arrested and convicted of disorderly conduct and violating Montgomery's racial segregation laws; and

Whereas, Her act of civil disobedience resulted in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, led by Martin Luther King Jr. where African Americans refused to ride city buses and instead walked or organized carpools; and

Whereas, 42,000 African Americans boycotted the Montgomery city buses for 381 days, beginning on December 5, 1955, until the bus segregation laws were changed on December 21, 1956; and

Whereas, The United States Supreme Court ruled on November 12, 1956 that the Montgomery segregation law was unconstitutional, and on December 20, 1956, Montgomery officials were ordered to desegregate buses; and

Whereas, Rosa Parks is the recipient of many awards and accolades for her efforts on behalf of racial harmony, including the Springarn Award, the NAACP's highest honor for civil rights contributions, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civilian honor, and the first International Freedom Conductor Award from the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center; and

Whereas, In 1999, President Bill Clinton honored Rosa Parks, on behalf of Congress, honoring her contributions to the United States and declaring her "the first lady of civil rights" and the "mother of the freedom movement"; and

Whereas, Her birthday, February 4, and the day she was arrested, December 1, have each been celebrated as "Rosa Parks Day" commemorated in California, Missouri, Ohio, and Oregon; and

Whereas, On December 1, 2005, transit authorities in New York City, Washington, D.C and other American cities symbolically left the seats behind bus drivers empty to commemorate Rosa Parks; and

Whereas, Within such a culturally diverse city that honors civil rights leaders, the Council should recognize Rosa Parks' contributions; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York establishes February 4 as Rosa Parks Day to commemorate the Civil Rights leader.

CMA / BM / CD
LS#8600/Res. 1299-2016
LS#729
10/17/18 5:00pm

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Res. No. 285

Resolution calling upon the United States Secretary of the Interior to recognize the historical significance of Roberto Clemente's place of death in Loíza, Puerto Rico, by adding it to the National Register of Historic Places.

By Council Members Rivera, Miller, Menchaca, Adams, Ayala, Ampry-Samuel, Eugene, Cornegy, Barron, Rosenthal, Chin, Lander, Cohen and Constantinides

Whereas, Roberto Clemente, born August 18, 1934 in Carolina, Puerto Rico, was a renowned Major League Baseball (MLB) right fielder who played for the Pittsburgh Pirates ("Pirates") from 1955 to 1972; and

Whereas, Roberto Clemente was first scouted in 1952 by the Brooklyn Dodgers, who signed him 15 months later and assigned him to Triple A Montreal for the 1954 season before the Pirates, utilizing the Major-Minor League Rule 5, claimed him for their team; and

Whereas, While playing for the Pirates, Roberto Clemente hit a remarkable .317 over 18 seasons, collecting 3,000 hits, and placing in the Pirate's Top Ten in every offensive and defensive category; and

Whereas, Roberto Clemente, an All-Star for 12 seasons, the National League (NL) batting leader for four years, and a Gold Glove Award winner for 12 consecutive seasons, was the first Latino to help win a World Series as a starter (in 1960), to receive an NL Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award (in 1966), and to receive a World Series MVP Award (in 1971); and

Whereas, As a Black Puerto Rican in MLB less than a decade after Jackie Robinson broke baseball's color barrier, Roberto Clemente faced discrimination for being a "double outsider;" he (as well as his Black teammates) were barred from dining in segregated restaurants or staying the same hotel with the rest of the team during spring training in Florida, while the

press relied on Latin stereotypes, mocked his accent by quoting him with phonetic spelling, and ignored his requests to not Anglicize his name in print; and

Whereas, Roberto Clemente challenged the stereotypes that had marginalized native Spanish speakers in the United States (U.S.) and often spoke out against prejudice; he became known as a strong voice for the growing contingent of Latino players in the major leagues, advocated for Latino civil rights, and was a close associate of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; and

Whereas, Rather than join the rest of the league to play Winter League Baseball in Puerto Rico during the 1958-59 off-season, Roberto Clemente enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve and served for six years as an infantryman; and

Whereas, Not only was Roberto Clemente an exemplary American baseball player and a hero to all Boricuas, he was deeply involved in Puerto Rican charities relating to young people and sports; and

Whereas, On December 31, 1972, Roberto Clemente tragically died at the age of 38 when a plane he chartered to bring food and relief supplies to earthquake-ravaged Nicaragua crashed near Piñones, in Loíza, Puerto Rico shortly after takeoff; and

Whereas, In 1973, Roberto Clemente was inducted posthumously as the first Latino player into the National Baseball Hall of Fame; and

Whereas, Since September 17, 2002, MLB has observed Roberto Clemente Day annually at every ballpark across both leagues, to commemorate the lasting memory of one of baseball's greatest ambassadors; and

Whereas, In honor of his memory, The Roberto Clemente Award is given annually to the MLB player who "best exemplifies the game of baseball, sportsmanship, community

involvement and the individual's contribution to his team," as voted on by baseball fans and members of the media; and

Whereas, According to the Hunter College Center for Puerto Rican Studies at the City University of New York, New York state is home to over one million Puerto Ricans, the largest population of Puerto Ricans on the U.S. mainland and, in the wake of the devastation caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, an additional estimated 11,000 Puerto Ricans have migrated to New York state; and

Whereas, New York City is home to the Roberto Clemente State Park, which hosts Roberto Clemente Week annually to celebrate his life with a series of special events in the Bronx and the Roberto Clemente Family Guidance Center in Manhattan; and

Whereas, The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation; and

Whereas, Roberto Clemente was an American baseball legend who embodied the values of a model citizen; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Secretary of the Interior to recognize the historical significance of Roberto Clemente's place of death in Loíza, Puerto Rico, by adding it to the National Register of Historic Places.

LS #6311
4/4/2018
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Res. No. 420

Resolution declaring November 11 as Polish Independence Day in the city of New York.

By Council Members Holden, Van Bramer, Gjonaj, Ulrich, Vallone, Rivera, Kallos, Lander and Cohen

Whereas, In 966, Duke Mieszko I, who ruled several Western Slavic tribes, consolidated his power and symbolically created the state of Poland; and

Whereas, In 1025, Boleslaw I, the son of Duke Mieszko I, established the Kingdom of Poland by expanding the region's territory and expanding the influence of Christianity; and

Whereas, The BBC states that up until 1772, Poland went through different regime changes, including being ruled by: the kings from the royal line of Mieszko from 966 to the end of the 14th century, the elected kings of the newly created Polish-Lithuania Commonwealth in the late 1500s, the Polish Golden Age's newly formed democratic monarchy in the 16th century, and outside influences from Russia, Prussia, Sweden, and the Ukraine in the mid-17th century; and

Whereas, The Encyclopedia Britannica indicates that the election of Stanislaw II August Poniatowski in 1764 resulted in political and social reform, which followed in civil war and 3 major partitions of Poland by Russia, Prussia, and Austria; and

Whereas, In 1795, due to the civil war and partitions, an Independent Poland ceased to exist; and

Whereas, After Poland lost its independence, there was a complete lack of public political activity, however, after years had passed, Polish nationalism and the fight for Polish Independence began to grow rapidly; and

Whereas, The Adam Mickiewicz Institute notes that from 1795 to 1918, there were many

uprisings and armed protests for Polish Independence, such as the Kosciuszko Insurrection in 1794, the November Insurrection in 1830 and the Uprising of January in 1863; and

Whereas, According to the BBC, from 1864 to 1914, the Polish national movement, in the then-partitioned Poland, shifted focus from armed protest to strengthening what was left of Poland through education, culture, and political parties, which fostered social reform and pushed for stronger advocacy for Polish Independence at the courts of the enemies of former Poland; and

Whereas, On November 11, 1918, due to World War I's end and the subsequent changes to Europe's political map, Poland regained independence and was restored as a country; and

Whereas, Since regaining independence in 1918, Poland has been involved in numerous important events, including: being invaded by Nazi Germany in 1939 which began World War II; being forced to adopt communism by the Soviet Union as the People's Republic of Poland in 1945; the Solidarity movement in the 1980s that resulted in the deterioration of communism and the establishment of the Third Polish Republic; and becoming a recognized role model for countries that experienced political transformation after the revolutions of 1989; and

Whereas, Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicates that Poland has celebrated Independence Day since 1920, with November 11 receiving the status of a state holiday in 1937; and

Whereas, According to data from the American Community Survey, there are approximately 200,342 people of Polish ancestry within New York City; and

Whereas, New York City is often called America's most Polish town, with many Polish restaurants, markets, and cultural institutes existing within the city; and

Whereas, Along with the culture, New York City has also recognized and celebrated Polish history, including its' commemoration of exemplary Polish leaders, such as Casimir

Pulaski with the 80th annual Pulaski Day Parade on Fifth Avenue, and Tadeusz Kosciuszko with the naming of the Kosciuszko Bridge which connects Greenpoint, Brooklyn, often called Little Poland, to Maspeth, Queens; and

Whereas, Declaring November 11 as Polish Independence Day in New York City will strengthen Polish-American pride, while commemorating the anniversary of the restoration of Poland's independence in 1918 and Poland's rich history; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York declare November 11 as Polish Independence Day in the city of New York.

LS#6220
4/5/18
KK

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Res. No. 421

Resolution declaring October 11 as Casimir Pulaski Day in the city of New York.

By Council Members Holden, Van Bramer, Gjonaj, Ulrich, Vallone, Rivera, Kallos, Lander and Constantinides

Whereas, Casimir Pulaski was born in Warsaw, Poland, on March 6, 1745; and

Whereas, At the age of fifteen, Casimir Pulaski joined his father, Count Josef Pulaski, and other members of the Polish nobility, to oppose the Russian and Prussian interference in Polish affairs; and

Whereas, The Polish American Center states that Casimir Pulaski, after fighting throughout Europe in defense of Polish liberty, was forced to flee to Paris, where he met Benjamin Franklin and became a strong supporter of the American colonists within the American Revolution; and

Whereas, In 1777, Casimir Pulaski arrived in Philadelphia, meeting George Washington, and volunteering his services to help the American colonists fight England; and

Whereas, The National Park Service asserts that on September 15, 1777, the American congress promoted Pulaski to the rank of Brigadier General in command of the Four Horse Brigades, due to his vast military experience and successes; and

Whereas, According to the Polish American Center, Casimir Pulaski became known as the “Father of the American Cavalry,” demanding much of his men and training them in tested cavalry tactics, many of which he used in his fight for freedom in Poland; and

Whereas, In May 1778, Pulaski began to form an independent cavalry unit later known as the Pulaski Legion, of which he personally financed in order to assure his forces had the finest equipment and received the best training; and

Whereas, Casimir Pulaski and his Legion were instrumental in protecting America's independence, including being involved in action along the New Jersey coast in October 1778, defending Charleston, South Carolina in May 1779, and fighting in the Siege of Savannah in Georgia in October 1779; and

Whereas, On October 11, 1779, Casimir Pulaski died, due to being mortally wounded during the Siege of Savannah; and

Whereas, Casimir Pulaski is a Polish-American hero who came from Poland to assist the American colonists during their fight with the British in the American Revolution, and is an integral part of American and Polish history; and

Whereas, A national day in observance of Casimir Pulaski was established in 1929 when the United States Congress passed a resolution (Public Resolution 16 of 1929) designating October 11 as General Pulaski Memorial Day, with a proclamation for the observance being issued every year since 1929, except in 1930; and

Whereas, New York City has an annual Pulaski Day Parade on Fifth Avenue which is held on the first Sunday of October and closely coincides with the nationally held General Pulaski Memorial Day, while other cities, such as Chicago, Illinois, Grand Rapids, Michigan and Buffalo, New York have celebrated Casimir Pulaski with parades, and/or days of commemoration;

Whereas, The declaration of October 11 as Casimir Pulaski Day in New York City will strengthen Polish-American pride, as well as celebrate and commemorate a man who is an integral part of American and Polish history; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the City of New York declare October 11 as Casimir Pulaski Day.

LS#6218
3/29/18
KK

Res. No. 422

Resolution declaring October 15 as Tadeusz Kosciuszko Day in the city of New York.

By Council Members Holden, Van Bramer, Gjonaj, Ulrich, Vallone, Yeger, Rivera, Kallos, Lander and Constantinides

Whereas, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, was born on February 4, 1746 in the village of Mereczowszczyzna, part of the formerly known Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania; and

Whereas, At an early age, Tadeusz Kosciuszko decided upon a career in the military, enrolling in the newly formed Szkola Rycersk (Academy of Chivalry), a school created by King Stanislaw II to train a well-educated cadre of officers and state officials; and

Whereas, The Institute of World Politics states that Tadeusz Kosciuszko graduated from Szkola Rycersk in 1765 with the rank of Captain, and went on to study military engineering; and

Whereas, In 1774, according to a biography by New York City's Department of Transportation (DOT), Tadeusz Kosciuszko returned to a drastically changed Poland, of which major parts had been annexed and its army had been forced to reduce to 10,000 soldiers; and

Whereas, The Adam Mickiewicz Institute indicates that Tadeusz Kosciuszko emigrated to America in June 1776, after being recruited by Benjamin Franklin to fight for American Independence from England; and

Whereas, According to The Institute of World Politics, Tadeusz Kosciuszko became the Chief Engineer of the entire Continental Army by the end of 1776;

Whereas, Tadeusz Kosciuszko played an integral role in the American war effort, showcasing his talent in constructing defensive fortifications, most notably seen in his fortifying of Philadelphia, Saratoga, Fort Ticonderoga, and West Point; and

Whereas, The Encyclopedia Britannica indicates that at the end of the American

Revolution, the United State Congress promoted Tadeusz Kosciuszko to Brigadier General in the United State Army, and awarded him with United States citizenship; and

Whereas, DOT asserts that in March 1794, Tadeusz Kosciuszko returned to Poland to lead a failed revolt against the combined troops of Russia, Prussia and Austria, leading to the division of Poland, and Kosciuszko's imprisonment and future exile from Poland; and

Whereas, In Tadeusz Kosciuszko's last twenty years of life, he set up a will that would dedicate his American estate's worth to freeing and educating African-American slaves and remained active in political discourse regarding Polish Independence; and

Whereas, Tadeusz Kosciuszko died on October 15, 1817, being placed in a crypt in Wawel Cathedral, a pantheon of Polish kings and national heroes; and

Whereas, Tadeusz Kosciuszko was a Polish-American hero who was an integral part of Polish and American history, being vital in the establishment of American Independence from England, while arduously working for independence for his native country Poland; and

Whereas, Tadeusz Kosciuszko is commemorated by having monuments, stamps, streets, and parks named after him, with the most notable being the Kosciuszko Mound at Krakow, the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial in Philadelphia, and the Kosciuszko Bride in New York City; and

Whereas, Declaring October 15 as Tadeusz Kosciuszko Day in the city of New York will strengthen Polish-American pride, and commemorate a Polish-American hero; now, therefore, be it,

Resolved, That the City of New York declares October 15 as Tadeusz Kosciuszko Day.

LS#6219
3/30/18
KK