



Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: Res 0321-2004 **Version:** * **Name:** Establish an Independent Commission on the 2004 Coup d'Etat in the Republic of Haiti.

Type: Resolution **Status:** Filed

In control: Committee on State and Federal Legislation

On agenda: 5/5/2004

Enactment date: **Enactment #:**

Title: Resolution in support of H.R. 3919, sponsored by Congresswoman Barbara Lee, which would establish an Independent Commission on the 2004 Coup d'Etat in the Republic of Haiti.

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
5/5/2004	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
5/5/2004	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
12/31/2005	*	City Council	Filed (End of Session)	

Res. No. 321

Resolution in support of H.R. 3919, sponsored by Congresswoman Barbara Lee, which would establish an Independent Commission on the 2004 Coup d'Etat in the Republic of Haiti.

By Council Members Barron, Lopez, Martinez, Perkins, Sanders, Seabrook and Stewart

Whereas, The Republic of Haiti marked its 200th year of independence on January 1, 2004, a feat which makes the Caribbean island nation the world's oldest Black republic; and

Whereas, The Republic of Haiti has been plagued by political violence and unrest for most of its years as an independent nation, including over three decades of dictatorship followed by military rule that ended in 1990, when Jean-Bertrand Aristide was democratically elected as president; and

Whereas, On September 30, 1991, during his first term in office, President Aristide was usurped by a military takeover that removed him from power until October 15, 1994, when he was returned to office with the assistance of the United States; and

Whereas, Constitutionally barred from running for a second consecutive term in 1995, President Aristide oversaw the installation of a close associate, Rene Preval, as President in 1996; and

Whereas, In 2000, President Aristide ran successfully once again for the presidency of the Republic of Haiti, winning a second term with approximately 92% of the vote, in an election that created a political crisis stemming from fraudulent legislative elections, and

Whereas, Unable to resolve the political crisis during the first three years of his second term, on February 29, 2004, President Aristide resigned and went into exile in the Central African Republic after several months of violent and deadly unrest between government forces and opposition rebels who had taken control of several Haitian cities and who had stated that the only peaceful way out of the political crisis was President Aristide's immediate resignation; and

Whereas, Upon President Aristide's departure from Haiti, published reports claimed that he was forced by the United States to resign and leave the country, a claim that has been denied by The White House and American officials; and

Whereas, Recently, Congresswoman Barbara Lee and 46 of her colleagues in the United States House of Representatives have introduced H.R. 3919, which would establish an Independent Commission on the 2004 Coup d'Etat in the Republic of Haiti; and

Whereas, H.R. 3919 would direct the Independent Commission on the 2004 Coup d'Etat in the Republic of Haiti to examine the United States' role in the coup, including the extent to which the United States impeded the democratic process in Haiti and any actions and policies by the United States that may have contributed to the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Haiti; and

Whereas, H.R. 3919 would also direct the Independent Commission on the 2004 Coup d'Etat in the Republic of Haiti to examine the circumstances of President Aristide's resignation and exile and the extent to which the United States fulfilled its obligations under the Organization of American States ("OAS") Inter-American Democratic Charter that requires each OAS member country to aid another OAS government under attack; and

Whereas, Additionally, H.R. 3919 would direct the Independent Commission on the 2004 Coup d'Etat

in the Republic of Haiti to examine the extent to which the United States impeded international efforts, particularly those of the Caribbean Community countries, to prevent the overthrow of President Aristide; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports H.R. 3919, sponsored by Congresswoman Barbara Lee, which would establish an Independent Commission on the 2004 Coup d'Etat in the Republic of Haiti.

LS# 863

RA - 4/29/2004

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