



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0285-2018, **Version:** *

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
CGR