



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 14

Resolution honoring and commemorating the bicentennial anniversary of Haiti.

By Council Members Clarke, Perkins, Barron, Stewart, Comrie, Brewer, Gerson, Boyland, Fidler, Jackson, James, Martinez, Quinn, Sanders, Weprin, Gennaro and Liu

Whereas, The proud Caribbean island nation of Haiti marked its 200th year of independence on January 1, 2004, a day also known as “Jour de L’Independence,” and will commemorate this historical achievement with a year-long celebration; and

Whereas, In 1791, after over 100 years of colonial rule by Spain and France, slaves of western African origin revolted against their French colonial masters on the western side of the island and, led by a Jamaican-born slave named Boukman, began a 13-year war of liberation, led by General Toussaint L’Ouverture and General Jean-Jacques Dessalines; and

Whereas, The former slaves defeated Napoleon and his army at the Battle of Vertieres in November 1803, and independence from France was declared on January 1, 1804; and

Whereas, The new republic was named Haiti, or Ayiti in Creole, by General Dessalines, which was the name given to the land by its original occupants, the Taino-Arawak peoples, and which means “mountainous country” or “high grounds”; and

Whereas, The Republic of Haiti is the world’s oldest Black republic, and its hard won victory of independence became an inspiration for the African Diaspora, and was a feat recognized by the new nation in the creation of its flag, which carries the coat of arms of the republic, a palm tree surmounted by the liberty cap and the phrase “L’Union Fait La Force,” which means “through unity we find strength;” and

Whereas, Haiti has enriched the world’s cultural life through unique gifts of literature, music and art by

such individuals as author Edwidge Danticat; musician Wyclef Jean; filmmaker Raoul Peck; playwright Felix Morisseau-Leroy; author Emile Ollivier; journalist Yvonne Hakim Rimpel; artist Hector Hyppolite; singer Emeline Michel; and many others; and

Whereas, According to the United States Census Bureau, the United States is home to a vibrant Haitian community of over 500,000, including approximately 118,000 who reside in New York City, where they have become an integral part of our City's great mosaic; and

Whereas, The Haitian community, with its indomitable spirit of liberty and equality, has become an important contributing member of our society, with individuals working in almost every profession and serving as community leaders and elected officials, while continuing to strive for a free and democratic society in their native homeland of Haiti; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York honors and commemorates the bicentennial anniversary of Haiti.

LS#320
RA
1/30/04