

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 344

Expressing the sense that there should be established a “National Garifuna Immigrant Heritage Month” in April to celebrate the great contributions of Americans of Garifuna immigrant heritage in the United States who have enriched the history of the Nation.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 28, 2023

Mr. TORRES of New York (for himself, Mr. ESPAILLAT, and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense that there should be established a “National Garifuna Immigrant Heritage Month” in April to celebrate the great contributions of Americans of Garifuna immigrant heritage in the United States who have enriched the history of the Nation.

Whereas the history of Americans of Garifuna immigrant heritage in the United States is inextricably tied to the story of the Nation;

Whereas Americans of Garifuna immigrant heritage in the United States come from the Central American region and have a common heritage and language that goes beyond national borders;

Whereas Americans of Garifuna immigrant heritage came to the United States voluntarily, and are distinct from, but have an origin similar to most African Americans, as both are descendants of mostly West and Central Africans who were involuntarily brought to the North American Continent by means of the historic Atlantic slave trade;

Whereas the West African slaves that escaped to the island eventually intermarried with the Caribs and the Arawaks' Indigenous native people, giving rise to what today we know as the Garifuna people;

Whereas after a battle against the British that resulted in the surrender of the Garifuna people, the defeated Garifuna leaders were transported to England and the rest of the Garifuna people to the island of Roatan, Honduras, arriving there on April 12, 1797, which began their settlement in Central America;

Whereas this year we commemorate the 226th anniversary of the arrival of the Garifuna people in Central America;

Whereas "National Garifuna Immigrant Heritage Month" would provide an opportunity to commemorate and recognize the contributions of the Garifuna people, and highlight the history and culture of Central American Black Indigenous immigrants in the United States;

Whereas language, dance, and music of the Garifuna people from Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua have been inscribed on a List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, first proclaimed in 2001 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;

Whereas people should be aware of the Garifuna people's fight for land rights against tourism, developers, and

drug traffickers in the region of Pintadillera, Playa Blanca, Puerto Grande, La Flor, Ciudad Morazán (Choloma), Orquídea (Colón), and Próspera (Islas de la Bahía); and

Whereas raising awareness about Garifuna immigrant heritage is crucial to effectively fighting disparities and injustices against Black and Indigenous populations in the United States, Latin America, and across the world: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

2 (1) a “National Garifuna Immigrant Heritage
3 Month” should be established to celebrate the significant
4 contributions of Americans of recent
5 Garifuna immigrant heritage to the history of the
6 United States; and

7 (2) the people of the United States should observe
8 the month with appropriate ceremonies, celebrations,
9 and activities to recognize that Americans
10 of recent Garifuna immigrant heritage enhance the
11 rich diversity of and strengthen the United States.
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