

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 940

Recognizing the week of December 25, 2023, as the “Week of the Fight Against Black Slavery in the Americas”.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 19, 2023

Mr. ESPAILLAT submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the week of December 25, 2023, as the “Week of the Fight Against Black Slavery in the Americas”.

Whereas, on the 26th day of December 1521, the first historically recorded rebellion of enslaved African people took place in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic;

Whereas tragically there is no perspective of the rebellion from the slaves, however, it was described in detail in the *Historia General y Natural de las Indias*, by Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo;

Whereas on the sugar plantation of Diego Colon, eldest son of Christopher Columbus and Viceroy of the Indies, approximately 20 African people who had been forcibly kidnapped and enslaved rebelled;

Whereas those individuals, taking notice of the lowered guard of their kidnappers, conspired to free themselves on the second day of Christmas of the year 1521;

Whereas after rising up and escaping their confinement, these 20 individuals were joined by many others, both African and Taino, in order to maintain their freedom;

Whereas these individuals moved toward the mountains in the middle of the island, during which time they saw combat with the White kidnappers and farmers who tried to confine them again;

Whereas after some time, the Spanish colonist killed or captured all those who had escaped, and thereafter created a series of ordinances that severely limited movement of freedom of the already enslaved peoples, and provided new mechanisms for keeping them from ever rebelling again;

Whereas this set of ordinances, being one of the first of its kind, enforcing the economy of mass enslavement in the New World, has left an indelible and infamous mark on the history of the laws, not just of the Dominican Republic, but of this Nation as well;

Whereas this early revolt of human beings against those who believed them to be property, was perhaps the first time in this hemisphere, after the first contact of Christopher Columbus, that the values that we extol in these United States, liberty and freedom, were manifested; and

Whereas on the anniversary of such an impactful event, the fight for those values Africans and Taino rebels adamantly defended is ongoing, continued by their descendants and all freedom-loving people in these United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes the historical significance of the
3 Week of the Anniversary of the 1521 Santo Do-
4 mingo Slave Revolt to the eventual abolition of slav-
5 ery;

6 (2) supports the recognition of the Anniversary
7 of the 1521 Santo Domingo Slave Revolt as an ever-
8 lasting symbol of heroic sacrifice and gallantry by
9 the slaves being held against their will in Santo Do-
10 mingo;

11 (3) acknowledges this revolt to be the first of
12 many revolts that would occur for nearly four cen-
13 turies after the infamous events of December 26,
14 1521; and

15 (4) encourages the people of the United States
16 to recognize the significance of this event, and com-
17 memorate this event by reflecting on, learning about,
18 and sharing the story of the events of December 26,
19 1521.

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