

2021-K832

Assembly Resolution No. 832

BY: M. of A. Rules (Bichotte Herm

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim
May 2022, as Haitian Heritage Month in the State of
New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body, in keeping with its time-honored traditions, to recognize and pay tribute to those organizations which foster ethnic pride and enhance the profile of cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric of the communities of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 2022, as Haitian Heritage Month in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Haitian Heritage Month celebrates the rich culture of Haiti and its people, including the history, language, distinctive art, delicious foods and traditions; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of the month is to raise awareness and understanding about Haitian culture, history and traditions; strengthen the self-esteem and ethnic pride of Haitian and Haitian-American youth; and celebrate Haitian achievements across the globe; and

WHEREAS, Jamaican-born Dutty Boukman, a Houngan, or Vodou priest, held the ceremony of Bois Caiman on the night of August 14, 1791, which is considered the founding act of the revolution; and

WHEREAS, Jean-Jacques Dessalines defeated Napoleon and the French colonists at the Battle of Vertieres at the end of 1803 to become the

first independent Black republic in the world; and

WHEREAS, General Toussaint Louverture led his revolutionary army to many victories, gaining the adoration of Blacks and mulattoes alike; surrendered to French general Charles Leclerc in 1802 on the promise that Leclerc would not restore slavery to the island; and was later arrested under false pretenses and imprisoned at Fort-de-Joux in France where he died in April of 1803; and

WHEREAS, The Haitian flag was designed by Jean-Jacques Dessalines and was adopted on May 18, 1803, at the Congress of Arcahaie which was held to establish the united command of the revolutionary army under the supreme authority of Jean-Jacques Dessalines; and

WHEREAS, The independence of Haiti echoes the importance of women and women of color in nation building, through revolutionaries like Marie-Jeanne Lamartiniere, who fought as a soldier in the Indigenous army, and Catherine Flon who, like Betsy Ross, is credited with crafting the Independent Black Republic of Haiti flag in 1803; and served as a nurse during the Haitian Revolution; and

WHEREAS, Flag Day is a reminder of the struggle to freedom and the Haitian Flag symbolizes the unity that borne the Haitian nation through

the alliance of the Blacks and mulattoes during the Revolutionary War; and the coat of arms that currently adorns the flag shows a palm tree surmounted by the Phrygian cap of liberty and ornamented with trophies with a banner that reads "L'Union Fait La Force" (In Unity, There is Strength); and

WHEREAS, Culinary dishes, such as Soup Joumou, a soup Haitian slaves were forbidden from eating as it was "reserved for their white masters," has become a symbol for Haitian freedom and has become a traditional dish to most Haitian families every January 1st to mark Haitian Independence Day; other traditional dishes include a variety of native foods and drinks such as Griot, Black Rice, Plantains, jus grenadia and rum; and

WHEREAS, Haitians produce the largest number of health care workers, nurses, and doctors in the Black diaspora; and

WHEREAS, Eight hundred men of color from Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti), fought along the Continental Army during the American Revolution at the Battle of Savannah in 1779; and

WHEREAS, Haitian-American immigrants have come to the United States bringing their own influences and cultural traditions to a variety of spheres including the arts, business, sports, literature, science and law; notable figures include: Jean-Michael Basquiat, one of the defining artists of the 20th Century; Jackson Georges, a Haitian-American painter who worked with wood, marble, metal and leather to create works featured at the World Trade Art Gallery, United Nations, and Mehu Gallery; Jean-Claude Brizard, a Haitian-American teacher and superintendent who served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools from 2011-2012; and Dean P. Baquet, a Haitian-American journalist who has served as the Executive Editor of The New York Times since 2014; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Assembly houses the largest Legislative Haitian Caucus in the country, with six members; and

WHEREAS, Haitian Creole is one of the top 10 languages spoken in New York City; and

WHEREAS, For decades, Haiti has faced significant challenges, including natural disasters, and multiple political crises that have devastated the land and disrupted the lives of millions of people; however, the Haitian people have demonstrated resilience throughout history; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 2022, as Haitian Heritage Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York, and Haitian Groups across the State.

