



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0809-2019, **Version:** *

Res. No. 809

Resolution declaring May 18 as Haitian Flag Day in the city of New York.

By Council Members Eugene and Lander

Whereas, The flag of Haiti was adopted on May 18, 1803, after Haitian Revolution leader and founding father of Haiti, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, tore the White section out of the French flag and his goddaughter, Catherine Flon, sewed together the Red and Blue sections, creating the first flag of the Republic of Haiti; and

Whereas, Haiti is the first and only nation to not only successfully lead a rebellion of enslaved people against their enslavers, but also to be founded by formerly enslaved people, after having declared independence from France in 1804; and

Whereas, The Haitian Flag is said to represent the unity of the Nation's people of color and a rejection of its White colonizers; and

Whereas, Citizens of Haiti and people of Haitian descent all across the world celebrate Haitian Flag Day on May 18th to recognize Haiti's strength, resilience, and rich cultural heritage, by gathering with friends and family, preparing and dining on Haitian cuisine, and participating in parades, festivals, and concerts; and

Whereas, Hundreds of thousands of Haitian-Americans reside, worship, and engage in commerce and recreation in New York City; and

Whereas, New York has the second largest Haitian diaspora in the United States and the second major population center, with 130,000 immigrants in the state, 160,000 Haitian-Americans concentrated in the New York metropolitan area (New York City-Long Island-Northern New Jersey), and more than 94,000 Haitians living in New York City-with over 90,000 living in Brooklyn, alone, giving it the third highest concentration in

the country, according to the Migration Policy Institute; and

Whereas, Haitian-Americans constitute the biggest immigrant group in Flatbush, Brooklyn, representing more than 20% of the foreign-born population, and nearly 11% of all Haitians in New York City live in Flatbush, making it this city's most heavily-concentrated Haitian neighborhood, according to the American Community Survey; and

Whereas, As the anti-immigrant climate in the United States further intimidates Haitian-Americans- including President Trump's alleged derogatory remarks towards Haiti, among other Caribbean, African and Latin American countries, and his administration's attempt to end Temporary Protected Status for over 50,000 Haitians, many of whom found refuge here after Haiti's catastrophic earthquake in 2010-it is now important to show solidarity with our Haitian-American public, while celebrating its traditions and values; and

Whereas, New York City has a history of recognizing and celebrating its Haitian community, including the designation of "Little Haiti" in Flatbush, Brooklyn, and the naming of streets in Haitian neighborhoods after prominent Haitian Revolution leaders, Jean Jacque Dessalines and Toussaint L'Ouverture; and

Whereas, Designating May 18 as Haitian Flag Day in New York City would further conserve Haitian heritage, formalize and foster relationships among residents, businesses, nonprofits, and community groups, as well as enable the showcasing, preservation, harnessing, and celebration of New York City's religious, academic, civic, cultural, health, and commercial Haitian institutions; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York declares May 18 as Haitian Flag Day in the city of New York.

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