

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of Black History Month. Black History Month was established in 1926 to pay tribute to the many African-Americans and other people of African descent for their myriad of contributions to human civilization. It is important to remember that during the years of 1619 and 1926 African-Americans received no recognition of their achievements that are inseparable from our lives.

Under President Woodrow Wilson's tutelage, the "Negro History Week" was created to promulgate the African-American achievements through sets of colloquiums, lectures, and exhibitions. It was to give a balanced view of all the people that contributed to the improvements of the Western society. Since then, the government has extended the longevity of the celebration to a month in order to provide a more extensive, global recognition and educational opportunity.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court ruling in the case of Brown versus the Board of Education, which established that every child deserves an education that is equal and substantive. This case changed the way African-American children were educated and was a catalyst that promoted change in the areas of voting, housing, and social justice.

In my home state of Arizona, before the year 1909, Arizona's schools were not segregated. However, during that year, Arizona's General Assembly passed legislation requiring African-American children to attend all black schools and be taught by black educators for the first eight years of their schooling. The first Tucson Unified Arizona District school to engage in segregation was the Paul Lawrence Dunbar School, named after a notable African-American poet. Through the collaboration of zealous teachers and caring parents, the students were able to receive a good education despite the school's inadequacies.

In 1951, Tucson Unified School District freely decided to integrate the school system, and in 1952 the school was renamed John Spring.

The school closed in 1978. To preserve the school, the Dunbar Coalition, a community organization, bought the property from Tucson Unified School District in 1995. The coalition is currently refurbishing the school and transforming it into an African-American Museum and Cultural Center. The school now serves as a venue for community events, and will be having a hearing on May 8th, 2004 to discuss the 50th anniversary of the Brown versus the Board of Education. Over 100 years ago, this building represented the inequities African-American children faced within the education system; it now symbolizes the injustices that are still present in the education system.

Black History Month, along with other celebrations, holidays and laws, has recognized the discrimination, harassment and abuse that blacks have endured. It showcases how far we have progressed, as well as reminds us that our goal in reaching true equality has not yet been completely fulfilled. Black History Month is a tool that educates and teaches the community on the African-American experience and struggle.

During this month, we acknowledge the many national African-American trailblazers such as, W.E.B. Dubois, Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., Frederick Douglas, Malcolm X, and Hiram Revels and Shirley Chisholm, the first African-Americans elected to the U.S. Congress. Through these individuals and the dedication and hard work of countless others we, as Americans, are more tolerant, patient and accepting of others. We benefit from their legacies not in February alone, but every day.

It is important that minority groups work collectively to ensure civil rights are sustained and each person is treated with the respect and dignity they deserve, regardless of the color of their skin or ethnic background. It is my goal to build strong alliances and coalitions among all minority communities to work collectively toward reaching true equality.

I am very proud to have the opportunity to stand on the floor of the United States House of Representatives to help celebrate Black History Month. This is the time when we must commemorate and celebrate the lives of the many African-Americans that have made historic contributions in the areas of academics, politics, science/technology, and social justice. Their struggles and their triumphs are engraved in our everyday life and it is essential that we celebrate all of their accomplishments.

REGARDING THE TRAGIC EVENTS
TAKING PLACE IN HAITI AND INTRODUCING
LEGISLATION WITH RESPECT TO THE URGENCY OF
CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the situation in Haiti continues to get worse. The attacks on towns and cities are ongoing and more frequent. There are reports of widespread looting and roundups. Haiti is now threatened with chaos.

The ongoing political crisis in Haiti has devastated the country's economy, social fabric, and the livelihoods of its people, leaving Haitians with a ruined economy and barely functioning physical infrastructure, few resources or the basic necessities to maintain life, and an insolvent government.

The path we tread is a difficult one. On the one hand, the disappointing Aristide presidency has reached an impasse, and has not yet shaken off the questions of constitutional legality. On the other hand, the democratic and constitutional principles are the foundations to a free society that we must always treasure. But the issue is not whether or not to support President Aristide. Rather, finding a solution that will bring stability while strengthening the democratic process in Haiti.

To achieve this, a political solution is needed to bring together all those that refuse to make things worse. The rebels are degrading the democratic institutions. For that reason, sacking an elected leader is a recipe for illegitimacy and more bloodshed.

The American people eagerly support a peaceful transition to a representative government in Haiti. Moreover, the Haitian communities in exile are committed to peace and de-

mocracy in their country, and I thank them for their steadfast advocacy for Haiti's interests.

Mr. Speaker, to put an end to violence, the best solution is to involve the international community in ceasing the hostilities, to find respite and protect the population. A peaceful and democratic solution is needed that respects the rule of law and the people's rights.

But, what can we do? I am introducing a resolution that will call for international efforts to end the violence and develop the economic and political institutions necessary to permit Haiti to sustain its population and restore its economic, social, and political process.

This legislation would also call on President Aristide to announce early elections. Thereafter, all the people of Haiti will decide whether or not new political leaders are needed.

It would be structured as follows:

The immediate formation of a United Nations peacekeeping force to help put an end to the violence in Haiti and assist with the subsequent peace, provide for political transition, and establish an economic reconstruction in Haiti.

International support preparing for early presidential elections by establishing a legitimate electoral process.

An international and long-term commitment to aid with the reconstruction of Haiti.

All of the above must be legitimized and implemented by the international community, with the absolute steadfastness from the United States to Haiti's peace, justice, and prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, as the Western Hemisphere's second-oldest democracy—wrestled from the clutches of European colonialism in 1804 by African slaves—the turbulent events in Haiti are of great concern to me. As a result, I am introducing this legislation with the utmost urgency.

I implore my colleagues to support this resolution.

IN HONOR OF DON RAY

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, next month, Don Ray, a great servant in Mississippi will be leaving his home and work in my district to serve a higher calling. We will miss him in the South, but the Lord has called him to a church in Michigan, and we are proud and excited he will be responding to this, the highest of callings.

Don and Jeannie Ray have reared a wonderful and loving family: son Craig; daughter Jene with her husband Michael Barranco and their children Mia Julia and Michael; daughter Jerri with her husband Ralph Ross and their children Jennings and Graeme; daughter Julie; and son Kyle with his wife Hilmari and their children Baylor and Carly Marie. Five children and six grandchildren are fitting legacy for anyone, but Don has made an impact in many other ways: the Church, higher education, and the world of finance.

Don has served as Vice President for Development at Belhaven College since November of 1999. Under his leadership, Belhaven has brought in multi-million dollar deals significantly increasing the vitality and stability of the