

Rep. Dianda offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 7.

A resolution to declare January 2017 as Finnish-American Heritage Month in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, On Midsummer's Eve 1865, some 30 Finns and Sámi landed on the shores of the Portage Canal in Hancock, Michigan, and began work in the copper mines the next day; and

Whereas, Their immigration formed a unique Finnish-American culture that reflects their roots and their continued ties to Finns worldwide and across Michigan; and

Whereas, Finnish American cuisine, from mojakka, a traditional stew, to leipäjuusto or "squeaky cheese," and sweet baked goods are still an important part of their rich culture; and

Whereas, The Finnish love for saunas has gone unchanged and saunas remain the place to go during the blistering cold winters of the Upper Peninsula; and

Whereas, Their pride in that ancestry is evident in a variety of ways from bilingual street signs to Finnish flags on cars and light poles to the sounds of the Finnish language being spoken each day in local restaurants and coffee shops; and

Whereas, Finns' strong work ethic in the mines made Michigan the world's largest provider of copper for decades; and

Whereas, The 1913 strike, during which many Finns fought for their rights as workers, was a momentous event in United States and Michigan labor history; and

Whereas, Michigan's Copper Country is recognized as the focal point of Finnish immigration to the United States; and

Whereas, Michigan is home to the nation's highest density of Finnish-Americans and more than 30 percent of the Copper Country's residents can claim Finnish ancestry; and

Whereas, Michigan's Copper Country remains a pivotal center of Finnish-American culture and is host to the most significant Finnish ethnic enclave outside of Finland; and

Whereas, Suomi College, now Finlandia University, in Hancock, Michigan, is the only institution of higher education founded by Finns in the United States; and

Whereas, Michigan boasts the Finnish American Historical Archives and it is the largest archival collection of Finnish American materials in the world; and

Whereas, Hancock, Michigan's, city council created the Finnish Theme Committee, tasked with preserving Finnish heritage for community development purposes; and

Whereas, The City of Hancock's Finnish Theme Committee created Heikinpäivä, an annual mid-winter celebration of Finnish ethnic identity and culture that draws attendance throughout the Midwest; and

Whereas, Heikinpäivä is celebrated to commemorate St. Henrik, the patron saint of Finland, and to mark the midpoint of the winter season; now therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body declare January 2017 as Finnish-American Heritage Month in the state of Michigan; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the City of Hancock and Finlandia University.