

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 110

Senators Damoose, Chang, Huizenga, Klinefelt, McMorrow, Cherry, Shink, Nesbitt, Geiss, Webber and Wojno offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to commemorate April 21-27, 2024, as Black April
2 Memorial Week.

3 Whereas, April 30, 2024, marks the 49th anniversary of the end
4 of the Vietnam War and the start of the eventual exodus of several
5 million Vietnamese out of Vietnam after South Vietnam's capital of
6 Saigon fell to the communists on April 30, 1975; and

7 Whereas, For many Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans who were
8 directly involved in the war, and Vietnamese Americans who have
9 settled in the United States (U.S.), the Vietnam War was a tragedy
10 full of great suffering and the loss of American, Vietnamese, and

1 Southeast Asian lives; and

2 Whereas, Over 58,000 people were killed and 304,000 were
3 wounded out of the 2.59 million Americans who served in the Vietnam
4 War. One out of every ten Americans who served in Vietnam became a
5 casualty of war; and

6 Whereas, South Vietnamese armed forces lost 275,000 soldiers
7 and many more were wounded, along with an unknown number of
8 Vietnamese civilian casualties; and

9 Whereas, During the American evacuation of Saigon, the first
10 wave of 135,000 Vietnamese who were mostly military officers and
11 their families, took temporary shelter through several
12 international refugee camps at Camp Pendleton in San Diego,
13 California, Fort Chaffee in Arkansas, and Indiantown Gap in
14 Pennsylvania; and

15 Whereas, Starting in 1977 and lasting through the mid-1980s, a
16 second wave of Vietnamese refugees comprised mostly of "boat
17 people" began leaving Vietnam. Seeing no future under communism,
18 nearly 800,000 boat people risked their lives in small, dangerous
19 boats to travel to resettlement camps in Hong Kong, Malaysia,
20 Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines before eventually
21 resettling in America. The Red Cross estimated that during that
22 time, at least 300,000 Vietnamese died on the high seas while
23 trying to escape communism; and

24 Whereas, After 1985, a third wave of Vietnamese refugees came
25 to the U.S. under the Orderly Departure Program; and

26 Whereas, In 1988, Congress passed the Operation Homecoming
27 Act, a program allowing approximately 80,000 Amerasian children
28 (offspring of GI fathers and Vietnamese mothers) to come to
29 America; and

1 Whereas, By 1990, the fourth wave of Vietnamese refugees began
2 arriving in the U.S. under the Humanitarian Operation, and today,
3 more than 1.7 million Vietnamese immigrants reside in our country;
4 and

5 Whereas, Census data shows that foreign-born Vietnamese
6 entering the U.S. in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s have seen an
7 increase in English proficiency, proportion of college graduates,
8 the number of owner-occupied housing, family median income, and
9 naturalization; and

10 Whereas, Over the years, Vietnamese immigrants have overcome
11 social, economic, and language barriers of unforeseen magnitude to
12 grow and become the most assimilated along civic dimensions out of
13 any large group in America; and

14 Whereas, Through emphasis on intense study, Vietnamese
15 Americans have reached the pinnacles of American success in a
16 variety of fields including business and entrepreneurship, science
17 and technology, space travel, medicine, the U.S. government,
18 politics, military, professional sports, and, most recently,
19 cultural icon status in cooking, modeling, acting, and comedy; and

20 Whereas, In order to serve their community and prosper in
21 America, Vietnamese Americans formed well-established and thriving
22 commercial districts throughout the U.S., including an enclave in
23 southeast Oakland County and in west Michigan; and

24 Whereas, More than 25,276 Vietnamese live in Michigan; and

25 Whereas, We must teach our children and future generations the
26 important lessons from the Vietnam War, including how the plight of
27 the Vietnamese refugees following the end of war is a powerful
28 example of the values of freedom and democracy; and

29 Whereas, Refugees and immigrants from the former Republic of

1 Vietnam, who came to the U.S. and settled as free Vietnamese
2 Americans, are honored and remembered for their sacrifices of
3 freedom, human rights, and for their ongoing contributions to our
4 democratic society; and

5 Whereas, The Vietnamese Heritage and Freedom flag, which is
6 yellow with three horizontal red stripes, is the only symbol that
7 can unite most Vietnamese around the world and bring them together,
8 showing the aspiration for freedom and democracy in their homeland;
9 and

10 Whereas, Although united in sorrow as they commemorate April
11 30, 2024, as Black April, an occasion to reflect on the sacrifices
12 of the past, Vietnamese American communities throughout Michigan
13 consider Black April a memorial and remembrance of the resilience
14 of the Vietnamese people; now, therefore, be it

15 Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative
16 body commemorate April 21-27, 2024, as Black April Memorial Week.
17 We recognize this special time for Michiganians to honor the
18 tragedy of the suffering and countless lives lost during the
19 Vietnam War era, while also paying tribute to those lives lost by
20 human rights and freedom to the people of Vietnam.