

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 38

Senators Damoose and Chang offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to commemorate April 20-26, 2025, as Black April
2 Memorial Week.

3 Whereas, April 30, 2025, marks the 50th 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
11 Southeast Asian lives; and

12 Whereas, Over 58,000 people were killed and 304,000 were
13 wounded out of the 2.59 million Americans who served in the Vietnam
14 War. One out of every ten Americans who served in Vietnam became a

1 casualty of war; and

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

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

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

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

22 Whereas, In 1988, Congress passed the Operation Homecoming
23 Act, a program allowing approximately 80,000 Amerasian children
24 (offspring of GI fathers and Vietnamese mothers) to come to
25 America; and

26 Whereas, By 1990, the fourth wave of Vietnamese refugees began
27 arriving in the U.S. under the Humanitarian Operation, and today,
28 more than 1.7 million Vietnamese immigrants reside in our country;
29 and

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

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

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

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

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

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

25 Whereas, Refugees and immigrants from the former Republic of
26 Vietnam, who came to the U.S. and settled as free Vietnamese
27 Americans, are honored and remembered for their sacrifices of
28 freedom, human rights, and for their ongoing contributions to our
29 democratic society; and

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

6 Whereas, Although united in sorrow as they commemorate April
7 30, 2025, as Black April, an occasion to reflect on the sacrifices
8 of the past, Vietnamese American communities throughout Michigan
9 consider Black April a memorial and remembrance of the resilience
10 of the Vietnamese people; now, therefore, be it

11 Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative
12 body commemorate April 20-26, 2025, as Black April Memorial Week.
13 We recognize this special time for Michiganians to honor the
14 tragedy of the suffering and countless lives lost during the
15 Vietnam War era, while also paying tribute to those lives lost by
16 human rights and freedom to the people of Vietnam.