

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO.16

Reps. Hill, Arbit, Bezotte, Fitzgerald, Glanville, Hope, Liberati, Morse, Price, Rogers, Schuette, Stone, Tsernoglou and Weiss offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to declare January 2023 as Finnish-American
2 Heritage Month in the state of Michigan.

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

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

9 Whereas, Finnish American cuisine, from mojakka, a traditional
10 stew, to leipäjuusto or "squeaky cheese," and sweet baked goods are

1 still an important part of their rich culture; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 Whereas, Hancock's, city council created the Finnish Theme
29 Committee, tasked with preserving Finnish heritage for community

1 development purposes; and

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

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

9 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of
10 this legislative body declare January 2023 as Finnish-American
11 Heritage Month in the state of Michigan; and be it further

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