

## SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 36

Senators Chang, Bayer, Geiss and Santana offered the following resolution:

1           A resolution to commemorate April 23-30, 2023, as Black April  
2 Memorial Week.

3           Whereas, April 30, 2023, marks the 48th 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, the Vietnam War was a tragedy full of  
10 great suffering and the loss of American, Vietnamese, and Southeast  
11 Asian lives; and

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

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

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

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

23           Whereas, After 1985, a third wave of Vietnamese refugees came  
24 to the United States under the Orderly Departure Program; and

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

29           Whereas, By 1990, the fourth wave of Vietnamese refugees began

1 arriving in the United States under the Humanitarian Operation, and  
2 today, more than 1.7 million Vietnamese immigrants reside in the  
3 United States; and

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

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

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

21       Whereas, In order to serve their community and prosper in  
22 America, Vietnamese Americans formed well-established and thriving  
23 Vietnamese American commercial districts throughout the United  
24 States, including an enclave in southeast Oakland County and in  
25 west Michigan; and

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

27       Whereas, We must teach our children and future generations the  
28 important lessons from the Vietnam War, including how the plight of  
29 the Vietnamese refugees following the end of war is a powerful

1 example of the values of freedom and democracy; and

2       Whereas, Refugees and immigrants from the former Republic of  
3 Vietnam, who came to the United States and settled as free  
4 Vietnamese Americans, are honored and remembered for their  
5 sacrifices of freedom, human rights, and for their ongoing  
6 contributions to our democratic society; and

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

12       Whereas, Although united in sorrow as they commemorate April  
13 30, 2023, as Black April, an occasion to reflect on the sacrifices  
14 of the past, Vietnamese American communities throughout Michigan  
15 consider Black April a memorial and remembrance of the resilience  
16 of the Vietnamese people; now, therefore, be it

17       Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative  
18 body commemorate April 23-30, 2023, as Black April Memorial Week.  
19 We recognize this special time for Michigianians to honor the  
20 tragedy of the suffering and countless lives lost during the  
21 Vietnam War era, while also paying tribute to those lives lost by  
22 human rights and freedom to the people of Vietnam.