

# HOUSE RESOLUTION NO.16

Rep. Hill 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  
11 still an important part of their rich culture; and

12 Whereas, The Finnish love for saunas has gone unchanged and

1 saunas remain the place to go during the blistering cold winters of  
2 the Upper Peninsula; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

29       Whereas, The City of Hancock's Finnish Theme Committee created

1 Heikinpäivä, an annual mid-winter celebration of Finnish ethnic  
2 identity and culture that draws attendance throughout the Midwest;  
3 and

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

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

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