

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO.186

Reps. Markkanen, Alexander, Bezotte, Breen, Hill, Morgan, Paiz and Schuette offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to declare February 18-24, 2024, as Sauna Week in
2 the state of Michigan.

3 Whereas, Finnish immigrants introduced the sauna, a centuries-
4 old traditional heat-and steam method of bathing, to North America
5 in 1638 when they arrived at New Sweden, a colony in what is now
6 Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; and

7 Whereas, Those Finns also introduced the log cabin to their
8 new land in the form of the sauna, often the first structure built
9 by settlers. The buildings, made with hand-hewn logs and double
10 dovetail joints, served as both shelter and place for the
11 centuries-old Finnish bathing method; and

1 Whereas, Pioneers across this great country adapted the sturdy
2 Finnish log structure for their housing as they moved westward,
3 with some seven United States presidents being born in log cabins;
4 and

5 Whereas, Sauna is an important part of Finnish American
6 culture and practice, with many generations enjoying traditional
7 saunas for cleansing and as a source of relaxation and socializing;
8 and,

9 Whereas, Michigan received more Finnish immigrants than any
10 other state, and has six counties in the western Upper Peninsula
11 where Finns make up the largest ethnic group, and

12 Whereas, Interest in authentic Finnish saunas has grown in the
13 U.S., particularly since the Covid pandemic, with a demonstrable
14 increase in construction of new public and at-home saunas
15 frequented by a broader population beyond the Finnish American
16 community; and,

17 Whereas, Hancock, Michigan is the home of the Finnish American
18 Heritage Center, which includes the national archive of Finnish
19 Americans, and

20 Whereas, The importance of sauna achieved international
21 attention when "sauna culture in Finland" was added to the UNESCO
22 list of Intangible Cultural Heritage; and,

23 Whereas, Medical experts, including a Mayo Clinic Proceedings
24 review, cite regular sauna bathing as having beneficial effects on
25 blood pressure, cardiometabolic biomarkers, arterial compliance and
26 cardiovascular function, as well as feelings of relaxation and
27 well-being related to increased production of endorphins; now,
28 therefore, be it

29 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of

1 this legislative body declare February 18-24, 2024, as Sauna Week
2 in the state of Michigan. We invite all residents to participate in
3
4 Sauna Week and enjoy the benefits of authentic sauna use.