

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 110

Senators Damoose, Chang, Huizenga, Klinefelt, McMorrow, Cherry, Shink and Nesbitt offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to commemorate April 21-27, 2024, as Black April
2 Memorial Week.

3 Whereas, April 30, 2024, marks the 49th 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

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 America. The Red Cross estimated that during that
21 time, at least 300,000 Vietnamese died on the high seas while
22 trying to escape communism; and

23 Whereas, After 1985, a third wave of Vietnamese refugees came
24 to the U.S. 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 U.S. under the Humanitarian Operation, and today,
2 more than 1.7 million Vietnamese immigrants reside in our country;
3 and

4 Whereas, Census data shows that foreign-born Vietnamese
5 entering the U.S. in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s have seen an
6 increase in English proficiency, proportion of college graduates,
7 the number of owner-occupied housing, family median income, and
8 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 U.S. government,
17 politics, military, professional sports, and, most recently,
18 cultural icon status in cooking, modeling, acting, and comedy; and

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

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

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

28 Whereas, Refugees and immigrants from the former Republic of
29 Vietnam, who came to the U.S. and settled as free Vietnamese

1 Americans, are honored and remembered for their sacrifices of
2 freedom, human rights, and for their ongoing contributions to our
3 democratic society; and

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

9 Whereas, Although united in sorrow as they commemorate April
10 30, 2024, as Black April, an occasion to reflect on the sacrifices
11 of the past, Vietnamese American communities throughout Michigan
12 consider Black April a memorial and remembrance of the resilience
13 of the Vietnamese people; now, therefore, be it

14 Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative
15 body commemorate April 21-27, 2024, as Black April Memorial Week.
16 We recognize this special time for Michigianians to honor the
17 tragedy of the suffering and countless lives lost during the
18 Vietnam War era, while also paying tribute to those lives lost by
19 human rights and freedom to the people of Vietnam.