Assembly Resolution No. 34

BY: M. of A. Solages

COMMEMORATING the 221st Anniversary of the Independence of Haiti from France

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay just tribute to the cultural heritage of the ethnic groups which comprise and contribute to the richness and diversity of the community of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in keeping with its time-honored traditions, it is the intent of this Legislative Body to commemorate the 221st Anniversary of the Independence of Haiti from France; and

WHEREAS, On January 1, 1804, after a prolonged struggle, Haiti proclaimed its independence from France, becoming the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere and the first free black republic in the world; and

WHEREAS, After gaining its independence, Haiti was charged by France what would have been $20 billion U.S. dollars today as reparations for its independence; this debt was not fulfilled until 1922; and

WHEREAS, The United States did not acknowledge Haiti until 1862, when Frederick Douglass visited to establish diplomatic relations; and

WHEREAS, The celebration of Haitian independence affirms the culture, identity and self-esteem of a people; it honors a rich heritage and illuminates Haitian history and tradition, as well as the spirit of an indomitable people; and

WHEREAS, The people of this great State and Nation and Haiti enjoy a deep and abiding relationship rooted in kinship and culture, and many New Yorkers proudly trace their own roots to Haiti; and

WHEREAS, The Anniversary of the Independence of Haiti from France is a time to celebrate the aspirations and values that have been shared with Haitians for generations and to recognize the countless contributions of Americans and New Yorkers of Haitian descent to every aspect of society; and

WHEREAS, The State of New York is greatly enriched by its large population of citizens of Haitian ancestry; and

WHEREAS, The 221st Anniversary of Haiti's independence provides an opportunity to recognize the significance of their contributions to the quality and character of life, and, through events and activities, for all people to gain a greater appreciation of Haitian history and traditions, and of the role Haitian Americans have played, and will continue to play, in our society; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is pleased to have this opportunity to recognize such events of significance which foster ethnic pride and exemplify the cultural diversity that represents and strengthens the fabric of the people and the State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 221st Anniversary of the Independence of Haiti from France.