Assembly Resolution No. 1277

BY: M. of A. Lucas

COMMEMORATING the Month of May 2026, as the celebration of Fiesta de la Etnia Negra (Black Heritage Month) in Panama, and May 31, 2026, as Dia de la Etnia Negra Nacional (National Black Heritage Day), and honoring Afro-Panamanian contributions to culture and society

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and celebrate the contributions of all cultural communities that have enriched the social, economic, and cultural fabric of New York State; and

WHEREAS, In the Republic of Panama, the month of May is celebrated as Fiesta de la Etnia Negra (Black Heritage Month), culminating on May 31st, which is recognized as Dia de la Etnia Negra Nacional (National Black Heritage Day), a day dedicated to honoring the African and Antillean descendants whose labor, resilience, and cultural influences have profoundly shaped Panama's history and society; and

WHEREAS, Dia de la Etnia Negra Nacional specifically marks the arrival of Africans and Antilleans to Panama, celebrating the rich cultural heritage they brought to the nation, including significant contributions to music, dance, food, language, and traditions that continue to thrive in Panamanian society today; and

WHEREAS, The Afro-Panamanian community consists of diverse groups, including Afro-Colonials, descendants of enslaved people brought to Panama during the colonial era, and Afro-Antilleans, descendants of West Indian immigrants who arrived in Panama in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly during the construction of the Panama Canal; and

WHEREAS, Afro-Panamanians have made lasting contributions in areas such as music, including the iconic fulia and bomba rhythms, art, literature, religion, and politics, shaping the cultural landscape of Panama and inspiring people globally; and

WHEREAS, Afro-Panamanian communities have had a major influence on Panama's national identity, serving as a living testament to the resilience and perseverance of African-descended peoples and their enduring legacy in shaping the country's social and cultural fabric; and

WHEREAS, The celebration of Fiesta de la Etnia Negra in Panama is a reflection of the strength, pride, and continued efforts to recognize and uplift Afro-Panamanian heritage, while fostering understanding and unity across all sectors of Panamanian society; and

WHEREAS, The Panamanian-American community in New York State has continued to honor and celebrate the culture, heritage, and traditions of Afro-Panamanians, recognizing the importance of promoting cultural appreciation, education, and inclusion; and

WHEREAS, The recognition of Fiesta de la Etnia Negra and Dia de la Etnia Negra Nacional provides an opportunity for all people to reflect on the contributions of Afro-Panamanian communities and to foster a broader dialogue on the importance of diversity, inclusion, and the rich cultural tapestry that shapes Panama's present and future; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the Month of May 2026, as the celebration of Fiesta de la Etnia Negra (Black Heritage Month) in Panama, and May 31, 2026, as Dia de la Etnia Negra Nacional (National Black Heritage Day), and to honor Afro-Panamian contributions to culture and society; and

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body calls upon all New Yorkers to celebrate and reflect on the achievements of Afro-Panamanian communities and to recognize the profound impact that African and Antillean peoples have had in shaping the heritage of Panama and the world; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Panamanian-American community in New York State.