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# City of Detroit

## CITY COUNCIL

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TO: The Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director   
Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: May 26, 2021

RE: **RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL CARIBBEAN HERITAGE MONTH**

Council Member Raquel Castañeda- López requested that the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) draft a resolution in support of National Caribbean Heritage Month. Please find the resolution attached.

Please contact us if we can be of any further assistance.

**BY COUNCIL MEMBER RAQUEL CASTAÑEDA-LÓPEZ**

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL CARIBBEAN HERITAGE MONTH**

**WHEREAS,** The mission of the Detroit City Council is to promote the economic, cultural and physical welfare of Detroit’s citizens and residents through Charter-mandated legislative functions; and

**WHEREAS,** From America's earliest days, Caribbean Americans have contributed to the success, spirit, and character of our Nation. For generations, their skills, knowledge, innovation, and initiative have enhanced and advanced many aspects of our society. Each year during National Caribbean-American Heritage Month, we celebrate the history and vibrant culture of the more than 4 million Americans with origins in the Caribbean; and

**WHEREAS,** Caribbean-Americans have influenced every aspect of American culture, society and government. Alexander Hamilton, the First Secretary of the Treasury, was from the Caribbean island of Nevis. Several other prominent Americans have Caribbean heritage, such as former Secretary of State Colin Powell, Academy Honorary Award recipients Cicely Tyson and Sidney Poiter, W.E.B Dubois, James Weldon Johnson, entertainer and human right activist Harry Belafonte, to name a few; and

**WHEREAS,** Locally, immigrants from the Caribbean region have been settling in Michigan since the 1800’s. First families found lodgings in the established black neighborhood of Detroit’s lower east side, known as Black Bottom

- ▶ St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church- *Deemed the “West Indian Church”*
- ▶ Bethel AME
- ▶ St. Cyprian

In 1925, thirteen leaders of the black community founded Detroit Memorial Park as a reaction to segregation at local cemeteries. Joseph Gomez (Trinidad) was one of three founders and members of the board of directors of West Indian origin. Others included Jamaican James M. Gregory, a dentist who later became a practicing lawyer, and Vollington Bristol from Barbados, who owned a funeral parlor on Joseph Campau and Macomb; and

**WHEREAS,** The year 2021 marks the 22nd Anniversary for establishing National Caribbean American Heritage Month. It was first recognize by The White House in August 1999, through a Caribbean Community Briefing; and

**WHEREAS,** The Institute of Caribbean Studies (ICS) partnered with the Office of Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-TX) to galvanize support from organizations across the country and planned events on Capitol Hill in recognition of National Caribbean American Heritage Month in June 2004. The bill was reintroduced and was passed in the U. S. House of Representatives in June 2005 and the Senate in February 2006. A Proclamation marking the Resolution official, was signed by President George W. Bush on June 5, 2006; and

**WHEREAS,** The National Caribbean American Heritage Month (NCAHM) theme for this year’s commemoration is “Our Shared History, Our Shared Future” and has encouraged people in all countries to join the global conversation of celebration of inclusivity and diversity,

and to remind us of the strong connection the City of Detroit will always have with the Caribbean region; **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

**RESOLVED,** That the City of Detroit:

- 1) recognizes the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the establishment of National Caribbean American Heritage Month (NCAHM), as well as the needs for and benefits of celebrating inclusivity and diversity
- 2) affirms the importance of promoting awareness and understanding of the roles Caribbean Immigrants have played in the City of Detroit
- 3) applauds Caribbean Nationals for the services they provide in the growth and development of the City of Detroit and the State of Michigan
- 4) encourages residents of all ages in the City of Detroit to commemorate and celebrate the mission, vision and purpose of the Caribbean led organizations to Support, Empower and Advocate for Caribbean Nationals in the Americas
- 5) calls on the United States government to reaffirm its support for the Caribbean region and its citizens to create a sustainable welcoming environment for them and their families; **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**

**RESOLVED,** That copies of this resolution be forwarded to Mayor Mike Duggan and Governor Gretchen Whitmer, the Michigan Delegation in Congress and the United States Department of the Interior.