

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 80

Rep. Brann offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to declare April 29-May 3, 2019, as Black April
2 Memorial Week in the state of Michigan.

3 Whereas, April 30, 2019, marks the 44th 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, the Vietnam War was a tragedy full of
10 great suffering and the loss of American, Vietnamese, and Southeast
11 Asian lives; and

12 Whereas, Over 58,000 people were killed and 304,000 were
13 wounded out of the 2.59 million Americans who served in the Vietnam



1 War. One out of every ten Americans who served in Vietnam became a
2 casualty of war; and

3 Whereas, South Vietnamese armed forces lost 275,000 soldiers
4 and many more wounded along with an unknown number of Vietnamese
5 civilian casualties; and

6 Whereas, During the American evacuation of Saigon, the first
7 wave of Vietnamese refugees, 135,000 strong, mostly military
8 officers and their families, took temporary shelter through several
9 international refugee camps at Camp Pendleton in San Diego, Fort
10 Chaffee in Arkansas, and Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania; and

11 Whereas, Starting in 1977, and lasting through the mid-1980s,
12 a second wave of Vietnamese refugees comprised mostly of "boat
13 people" began leaving Vietnam. Seeing no future under communism,
14 nearly 800,000 boat people risked their lives in small, dangerous
15 boats to travel to resettlement camps in Hong Kong, Malaysia,
16 Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines before eventually being
17 resettled in the United States. The Red Cross estimated that during
18 that time, at least 300,000 Vietnamese died on the high seas while
19 trying to escape communism; and

20 Whereas, After 1985, a third wave of Vietnamese refugees came
21 to the United States under the Orderly Departure Program. In 1988,
22 Congress passed the Operation Homecoming Act, a program allowing
23 approximately 80,000 Amerasian children (offspring of GI fathers
24 and Vietnamese mothers) to come to America; and

25 Whereas, By 1990, the fourth wave of Vietnamese refugees began
26 arriving in the United States under the Humanitarian Operation and
27 today, more than 1.7 million Vietnamese immigrants reside in the
28 United States; and

29 Whereas, Studies using census data show that foreign-born

1 Vietnamese entering the United States in the 1980s, 1990s, and
2 2000s, have seen an increase in terms of English proficiency,
3 proportion of college graduates, the number of owner-occupied
4 housing, family median income, and naturalization; and

5 Whereas, Over the years, Vietnamese immigrants have overcome
6 social, economic, and language barriers of unforeseen magnitude to
7 grow and become the most assimilated along civic dimensions of any
8 large group in America; and

9 Whereas, Through emphasis on intense study, Vietnamese-
10 Americans have reached the pinnacles of American success in a
11 variety of fields including business and entrepreneurship, science
12 and technology, space travel, medicine, the executive branch of the
13 United States government, politics, the United States military, the
14 United States judicial system, professional sports, and, most
15 recently, cultural icon status in cooking, modeling, acting, and
16 comedy; and

17 Whereas, In order to serve their community and prosper in
18 America, Vietnamese Americans formed well-established and thriving
19 Vietnamese-American commercial districts throughout the United
20 States, including an enclave in southeast Oakland County and in
21 west Michigan; and

22 Whereas, More than 17,000 Vietnamese now live in Michigan; and

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

27 Whereas, Refugees and immigrants from the former Republic of
28 Vietnam who came to the United States and settled as free
29 Vietnamese-Americans are honored and remembered for their

1 sacrifices for freedom and human rights and for their ongoing
2 contributions to our democratic society; and

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

8 Whereas, Although united in sorrow as they commemorate April
9 30, 2019, as Black April, an occasion to reflect on the sacrifices
10 of the past, Vietnamese-American communities throughout Michigan
11 consider Black April a memorial and remembrance of the resilience
12 of the Vietnamese people; now, therefore, be it

13 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of
14 this legislative body declare April 29-May 3, 2019, as Black April
15 Memorial Week in the state of Michigan. We recognize this as a
16 special time for Michigianians to honor the tragedy of the suffering
17 and countless lives lost during the Vietnam War era and to pay
18 tribute to those lives lost by affecting human rights and freedom
19 to the people of Vietnam.