

# AMERICA



**US REPRESENTATIVE HON. BARBARA LEE**

**Congressional Record**  
**109th Congress (2005-2006)**

**NATIONAL CARIBBEAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH**

SPEECH OF  
**HON. BARBARA LEE**  
OF CALIFORNIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 2006

- **Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Caribbean American community in honor of the first-ever National Caribbean American Heritage Month.**
- **On June 27, 2005, the House unanimously adopted H. Con. Res. 71, my resolution to declare June National Caribbean American Heritage Month. On February 14, 2006, the Senate followed suit, thanks to the work of Senator SCHUMER of New York and Arielle Goren on his staff.**
- **And let me begin by recognizing the many people who helped realize this 2-year bipartisan, bicameral effort, because this**

**was quite a feat. First, I want to recognize our colleague, a great leader on so many issues and especially on health care, Congresswoman DONNA CHRISTENSEN from the Caribbean, who has been tremendous in terms of bringing us together to address the issues of health disparities throughout our country and throughout the world.**

- **Also, I would like to thank the Institute of Caribbean Studies, especially Dr. Claire Nelson and her team, for joining us in this effort from the very beginning.**
- **And we must recognize our friends from the Caribbean diplomatic corps, who worked so hard to spread the word about this effort both at home in the Caribbean and in their embassies and consulates across the country.**
- **There are many Members of Congress who supported this effort. In addition to early support from my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus and Friends of the Caribbean Task Force, the former chair of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, Representative Cass Ballenger, was the first Republican to endorse this bill, and his successor, Chairman DAN BURTON, was one of the first to help urge the President to issue an official proclamation.**
- **This was truly a bipartisan effort, with, of course, our chairman Mr. HYDE of the International Relations Committee and our ranking member Mr. LANTOS, who lent their very strong support.**
- **And, of course, we never would have done any of this without our staff. First, let me commend and thank my staff person Jamila Thompson for her leadership and for her commitment to not only this issue and this bill, but for so many of the efforts that she mounts. She has roots in the Bahamas, and she understands the importance of recognizing Caribbean Americans and their proper role and proper recognition in our country.**
- **Also, we had many other House staff members--Ted Brennan, Jack Scharfen, Paul Oostburg, Dan Getz, Mark Walker, and Michael Layman--who worked in a bipartisan way to make this a reality and really to realize this dream for many, many people.**
- **The Government Reform Committee, Chairman TOM DAVIS, and our Ranking Member HENRY WAXMAN applauded the passage of this resolution last year and were instrumental in its passage.**
- **And, of course, in the final weeks before the proclamation was issued by the White House, a coalition was formed that was very instrumental in urging the White House to officially declare June National Caribbean-American Heritage Month. This coalition included Senator MEL MARTINEZ from Florida, Ambassador Tom Shannon, State Department's Assistant Secretary for the Western Hemisphere, and Brian Nichols of his staff.**

- **And the Caribbean American community was very active around this effort. It could not have been done without them. From Glenn Joseph and John Felix in Florida; to Jean Alexander, Horace Morancie, and Anthony Carter in New York; to Shorron Levy in California and so many others across the country, this became, quite frankly, an international grass-roots effort.**
- **So I am pleased that on June 5, the President responded by officially declaring June National Caribbean American Heritage Month.**
- **We have some phenomenal spokespersons Sheryl Lee Ralph and basketball legend Rick Fox, who are traveling throughout the country.**
- **Sheryl Lee Ralph is a woman of Caribbean descent from Jamaica actually, and is a great actress as well. Her voice on HIV and AIDS, as well as promoting and spreading the word about Caribbean American Heritage Month, will be very valuable in terms of making sure that our entire country knows about the phenomenal contributions of Caribbean Americans.**
- **On a very personal level, my relationship with persons of Caribbean descent began with the late great former member of this body, the first African American woman elected to Congress, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm. I worked as a volunteer in her historic 1972 Presidential campaign. As a woman of Barbadian and Guyanese descent, Congresswoman Chisholm never forgot her roots and connections to the Caribbean. Her work, whether it was fighting for equal access to education in the United States Congress or Haitian refugees in detention camps, her commitment always stemmed from her faith and her strong Caribbean values.**
- **When the United States-Caribbean relations began to deteriorate over the war in Iraq, the coups in Haiti, and the Cuban embargo, I knew that we needed to go back and really recognize our deep and strong relations with the Caribbean. So we need to send a message of goodwill to the Caribbean American community.**
- **Soon I will be introducing the Shirley Chisholm Caribbean Educational Exchange Act of 2006 to provide existing and expanded educational exchanges between our country and the Caribbean.**
- **This legislation has two components:**
- **First it supports and expands existing primary and secondary training programs currently operating in the Caribbean.**
- **And second it establishes the Shirley Chisholm Educational Exchange program structure for U.S. and Caribbean high school, undergraduate and graduate students, and professional scholars.**

- I would like to close by reminding those here in Congress and others watching at home that during Caribbean-American Heritage Month, each of us should look to the past and to the future in recognizing the strong role of the Caribbean and the Caribbean-American community in United States history.
- Thank you. Mr. Speaker. This process was really an exercise in democracy, and I ask unanimous consent to insert into the *Congressional Record* a list of organizations from across the country that supported this effort:
- The Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and CARICOM Foreign Ministers included the following statement in their joint press release issued at the conclusion of the US-CARICOM Ministerial Meeting held in The Bahamas in March 2006:
- The Ministers and the Secretary of State welcomed the recent resolution of the U.S. Congress to commemorate Caribbean American Heritage Month in June. The resolution is a recognition of the deep and lasting human ties that bind the United States and the Caribbean."
- This bi-partisan effort to create a National Caribbean-American Heritage Month is supported by Ambassador Albert Ramdin, Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States, the Caucus of CARICOM Ambassadors in Washington, DC, and the following organizations:
- The Institute for Caribbean Studies, DC; Caribbean-Central American Action, DC; Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce of Florida, Inc.; The West Indian American Day Carnival Association, NY; Caribbean-American Cultural Association, Inc. of North America (CACANA), FL; Caribbean-American Center of New York; Conference of Heads of Caribbean Organizations of Central Florida; TnT International, Inc.; The Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry--Greater Washington Area Network; South Florida Caribbean Diaspora Task Force; Trinidad & Tobago Working Women's Committee, DC; Caribbean Association of World Bank Group and IMP Staff, DC; Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (CACCI), NY; Global Exchange, CA; Caribbean Peoples International Collective, NY (CPIC); The St. Lucia Nationals Association; Andrea M. Ewart, P.C.; Dominica Academy of Arts & Sciences, DC; Metro Atlanta Caribbean Cultural Arts Centre, Inc. (MACCA); The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA); The Caribbean Voice, NY; Northern California Caribbean American Heritage Month Committee; Central Florida's Caribbean Sun Newspaper; The Guyanese Society of St. Louis; The Caribbean Club in Mount Vernon, NY; Caribbean Professional Networking Series, DC; Caribbean World Arts & Culture, Inc.; St. Kitts and Nevis Association of Metropolitan Washington; The West Indian Social Club of Hartford. Inc.;

**The Inter-American Economic Council; Sunrise Symphony Steelpan Corporation; Barbados Assoc. of Central Florida; Jamaican American Association of Central Florida; Grenadian-American Educational and Cultural Organization of Central Florida, Inc.; Caribbean and Floridian Association, Inc. (CAFA); Guyanese American Cultural Association of Central Florida; Orlando Carnival Association, Inc.; Alliance of Guyanese Expatriates of Central Florida; Caribbean Students' Association at the University of Central Florida; Jamaican/American Partners in Education, GA; Central Florida Cricket League; Caribbean Bar Association (Central Florida Chapter); Antigua and Barbuda Association of Central Florida; Association of Asian Cultural Festivals, Inc.; Caribbean Community Connection of Orlando, Inc.; Trinidad & Tobago Association of Central Florida; Suriname American Network; Haitian American Support Group of Central Florida, Inc.; Caribbean-Guyana Institute for Democracy; The Indo-Caribbean Council, NY; The Haitian American Historical Society, FL; Caribbean American Intercultural Organization; Sistas-With Style, CA; Dominican American National Roundtable, DC; West Indian Social Club of Hartford, Inc.; Caribbean American Society of Hartford; The Ballentine Group; Jamaica Progressive League; St. Lucian American Society of Hartford; Mico Alumni Association Inc.; Guyanese American Cultural Association; Connecticut Haitian American Organization, Inc.; Barbados American Society of Hartford; Sportsmen Athletic Club & Cricket Hall of Fame; Cultural Dance Troupe of the West Indies; Trinidad and Tobago Steel Symphony; Jamaica Ex-Policeman Association of Connecticut; West Indian American Newspaper; Center for Urban & Caribbean Research; CAYASCO, Inc.; Martin Luther King Jr. Soccer League; Morancie Family Reunion, Inc., NY; Tropical Paradise Restaurant and Juice Bar, NY; Jamaica Nationals Association, DC; Medgar Evers College, NY; Carriacou Charitable Health Services, Inc., NY; The Caribbean World News Network, NY; The Shirley Chisholm Cultural Institute for Children, Inc., DC; Caribbean Research Center, NY; Montserrat Progressive Society of NY, Inc.; The Georgia Caribbean-American Heritage Month Planning Committee, GA; Ainsley Gill & Associates LLC, DC; SOCA Warriors United, NY; The Black Diaspora, NY; Sunrise Symphony Steelpan Orchestra, Inc., NY; Gloria's In & Out Restaurant, NY; Virgin Islands Association, DC; CCB International, Inc., NJ; TATUCA, NY; Callaloo Magazine, NY; Department of African American Studies, Ohio University; Hannah's Place International, NY; Guyana Folk Festival, DC; Caribbean Sunshine Awards, NJ; Trinidad and Tobago Business Association, Inc., NY; RAJHUMARI Center for Indo-Caribbean Arts & Culture, NY; Mauby Media Services, NY; Merrymakers Cultural Association, NY; Caribbean People's Association, NJ; Trin-American Social & Cultural Association, DC; Trinidadian and Tobagonians Inc., NY; Gasparillo Group, NY; Trinidad and Tobago Association of Washington, MA; Caribbean Journal, NY; St. Anthony's Spiritual Baptist Church, PA; Friends of the Caribbean, Inc., DC; The International Consortium of Caribbean Professionals (ICCP); Tropicalfete.com, NY; St. Louis-Georgetown Sisters Cities Committee, MO;**

**Virgin Islands Association of the District of Columbia (VIA); Patterson Dental Clinic, NJ; Barbados American Society of Hartford, Inc.; TransAfrica Forum, DC; Caribbean-African-American Hotline, Ads, News, Gospel & Global Events (411XCHANGE), NY; Belizean Information & Services International, NY; St. Vincent and the Grenadines Nationals Association of Washington, DC; eCaroh Caribbean Emporium, MA; Caribbean American Weekly (CAW), NY; Council of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Organizations U.S.A., Inc., NY; St. Vincent Benevolent Association; Bequia United Progressive Organization, Inc.; Chateaubelair Development Organization; Club St. Vincent, Inc.; Canouan United Social Organization, Inc.; Friends of the St. Vincent Grammar School; Girls High School Alumnae; Hairoun Sports Club; St. Vincent and the Grenadines Humanitarian Organization; Mas Productions Unlimited; Striders Social and Cultural Organization; St. Vincent and the Grenadines Ex-Police Association; St. Vincent and the Grenadines Ex-Teachers Association; St. Vincent and the Grenadines Nurses Association; United Vincie Cultural Group of Brooklyn; Concerned Americans for Racial Equality, NY; Benevolent Missions of Atlanta, Inc. (BMA); Barbados Association of Greater Houston; Bahamian Junkanoo Association of Metropolitan DC.; The National Coalition on Caribbean Affairs (NCOCA), MD. H. CON. RES. 71 COSPONSORS (81) DURING THE 109TH CONGRESS**

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- Representatives **PAYNE, NEY, CHRISTENSEN, Ballenger, OWENS, RANGEL, SERRANO, HASTINGS (FL), TUBBS JONES, MCDERMOTT, MEEK (FL), CLYBURN, CAPUANO, WATT, LEWIS, A. DAVIS, B. SCOTT, S. BISHOP, B. THOMPSON, NORTON, EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, WATERS, CUMMINGS, KILPATRICK, RUSH, LOFGREN, TOWNS, GRIJALVA, D. SCOTT, Majette, WEINER, MEEKS (NY), Acevedo-Vilá, CONYERS, KUCINICH, WYNN, JACKSON-LEE, SWEENEY, BERMAN, DELAHUNT, WOOLSEY, FEENEY, SHIMKUS, VAN HOLLEN, ENGEL, Deutsch, WATSON, Ballance, MENENDEZ, BERKLEY, JEFFERSON, RUPPERSBERGER, LANTOS, ISRAEL, GONZALEZ, LACY CLAY, WEXLER, ROS-LEHTINEN, FORD, JACKSON, MILLENDER-MCDONALD, C. BROWN, D. MOORE.**





**GEORGE W. BUSH (43rd PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES)**

**CARIBBEAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH, 2006--BY THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA--A  
PROCLAMATION**

During Caribbean-American Heritage Month, we celebrate the great contributions of Caribbean Americans to the fabric of our Nation, and we pay tribute to the common culture and bonds of friendship that unite the United States and the Caribbean countries.

Our Nation has thrived as a country of immigrants, and we are more vibrant and hopeful because of the talent, faith, and values of Caribbean Americans. For centuries, Caribbean Americans have enriched our society and added to the strength of America. They have been leaders in government, sports, entertainment, the arts, and many other fields.

During the month of June, we also honor the friendship between the United States and the Caribbean countries. We are united by our common values and shared history, and I join all Americans in celebrating the rich Caribbean heritage and the many ways in which Caribbean Americans have helped shape this Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2006 as Caribbean-American Heritage Month. I encourage all Americans to learn more about the history of Caribbean Americans and their contributions to our Nation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

***GEORGE W. BUSH.***

