

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 384

Approved October 10, 2024

WHEREAS, In recent weeks, there has been a troubling increase in violence and threats against the Haitian American community, fueled by false and hateful rhetoric that seeks to sow division; and

WHEREAS, The spread of falsehoods, including fabricated stories about Haitian people, promote division, dehumanizes individuals, and has led to a hostile environment filled with racist tropes and misinformation; and

WHEREAS, Over 30 bomb threats and the threat of a mass shooting in Springfield, Ohio, are directly linked to the spread of baseless and harmful narratives targeting Haitians or people of Haitian descent; and

WHEREAS, Food-based racialized epithets and other forms of racism have long been used as a tool of oppression, and such baseless claims are harmful not only to those targeted but to the fabric of American unity; and

WHEREAS, Recent weeks have seen a concerning portrayal of immigrants, particularly within the Haitian community in Springfield, Ohio, driven by misleading and hateful rhetoric from former President Donald Trump and current U. S. Senator and republican vice-presidential nominee J.D. Vance; and

WHEREAS, The vibrant Haitian American community in the United States has deep historical roots, dating back to the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when refugees fleeing the Haitian Revolution settled in various American cities; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, there have been multiple waves of migration by the Haitian people to the United States, and today, the Haitian American population in our country stands at just over a million people; and

WHEREAS, These hardworking Americans are our neighbors, friends, classmates, coworkers, and fellow citizens, contributing to our society as doctors, teachers, truck drivers, politicians, and professors. They have enriched our nation with their music, culture, food, and community, exemplifying the diverse spirit that makes the United States a nation of immigrants; and

WHEREAS, The United States and Haiti share a rich history of fighting for independence and being allies for over two centuries; and

WHEREAS, Haitian Americans and their descendants have made significant contributions to the advancement of American society, including Florida State Senator Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick, former Providence City Councilor Nirva LaFortune, Boston City Council President Ruthzee Louijeune, Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, founder of Chicago, and W.E.B. Du Bois, civil rights activist and scholar, and countless others in government, healthcare, education, the arts, faith, and social justice; and

WHEREAS, As conversations about immigration continue to evolve, let us honor the Haitian American diaspora as a living symbol of resilience and hope, as their journey illustrates the power of turning struggle into strength, reminding us of the profound contributions they make to our society.



NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council:

- (1) Recognizes and celebrates the significant contributions of Haitian Americans and people of Haitian descent to the United States and Rhode Island;
- (2) Strongly condemns and denounces all forms of discrimination, including racism, xenophobia, and bigotry, towards Haitian people;
- (3) Calls on all Americans to reject racist tropes and speak out against misinformation, particularly false narratives that endanger communities;
- (4) Affirms the importance of promoting inclusivity and honest communication, urging elected officials and community leaders to act responsibly; and
- (5) Stands in solidarity with the Haitian-American community, reaffirming our commitment to protect and uplift all communities that have long contributed to this country.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That upon passage of this resolution, copies be sent to New Bridges for Haitian Success (NB4HS), the Haitian American Partnership for Positive Actions (HAPPA-RI), the Office of Governor Daniel J. McKee, the Office of the Rhode Island Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi, the Office of the Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio, the Rhode Island federal delegation, the Executive Director of the Providence Human Relations Commission, and the Executive Director of the Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights.

IN CITY COUNCIL

OCT 03 2024
READ AND PASSED


RACHEL D. MILLER, PRESIDENT

CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.


Mayor

Date: 10/10/24