

CELEBRATION OF CARIBBEAN
HERITAGE MONTH

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of Caribbean Heritage Month.

It is appropriate for our country to recognize the numerous contributions of Caribbean-Americans and our Caribbean neighbors to United States history and culture, particularly since our friendships and economic partnerships in the region continue to expand.

Caribbean immigrants are found throughout the United States, and aspects of Caribbean cultures are becoming increasingly commonplace, often touching our lives in subtle ways through art, music, literature, and science.

People from the Caribbean nations have a long and proud history here. In fact, one of our most prominent founding fathers, Alexander Hamilton, was born on the Caribbean island of Nevis and then raised in St. Croix, another island of the Caribbean.

However, meaningful contributions by Caribbean immigrants began long before the American Revolution. Beginning as early as 1619, indentured workers were brought to the Jamestown colony in what is now modern-day Virginia.

Over the next four centuries, our histories and cultures became inextricably linked, so much so that many of our communities have now become an indistinguishable mixture of Caribbean and American culture and language.

My own district in South Florida is home to Bahamians, Haitians, and Jamaicans, and people from St. Kitts, Grenada, Barbados, and several other Caribbean nations.

Many of these Caribbean immigrants, as legal residents in the U.S. have enlisted in our Armed Forces and have meritoriously served

in combat, putting their lives on the line to protect the people and ideals of this Nation.

During the American Revolution, these shared ideals were evidenced by freemen from the French colony of Saint Domingue, now the Republic of Haiti, who came to the United States and fought alongside our Continental Army.

Later, in 1822, it is of note that Denmark Vessey came from St. Thomas to lead an unsuccessful slave rebellion, which was the largest ever planned in our country.

Ashley Totten and Frank Crosswaith, who were born on St. Croix, helped to establish key labor unions, some still in operation today. J. Raymond Jones from St. Thomas, who is also known as the Silver Fox, ran New York City politics in the 1900s.

John James Audubon, the acclaimed naturalist and wildlife artist, was born in the former-French territory of Saint Domingue, what is now Haiti, and inspired the American conservation society that bears his namesake. W.E.B. DuBois, the Haitian-American author and political activist, became one of the most prominent, intellectual leaders of African-American society during the 20th century.

Major Joseph Savary, a Haitian, was the first black major in the United States Army, and led the Second Battalion of Freemen of Color at the Battle of New Orleans, January 8, 1815, under then-General Andrew Jackson.

Other famous Caribbean Americans include former U.S. Representative, and first female presidential candidate, Shirley Chisholm; former Head of the Ford Foundation, Franklin Thomas; Federal Judge Constance Baker Motley, the first black woman appointed to the Federal judiciary; activists such as Stokely Carmichael, Kwame Toure, Roy Innis, Malcolm X, and Lois Farrakhan; as well as world renowned actor Sidney Poitier; civil rights activist and singer Harry Belafonte; Earl Graves, philanthropist, businessman, and publisher of Black Enterprise; and now Colin Powell, the first black U.S. Secretary of State, just to name a few.

It is indeed fitting to establish a Caribbean Heritage Month as a suitable way for our country to recognize these great Caribbean-Americans and the contributions they have made to our history and society. I am proud that these contributions have finally been recognized, and I am pleased to be joined by my colleagues to pay tribute to those who have made our nation great.

INTRODUCTION OF DIBRS
LEGISLATION

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, today, along with Representative CHRIS VAN HOLLEN (D-MD), I introduce legislation to force the Department of Defense (DoD) to implement fully the Defense Incident-Based Reporting System (DIBRS). I firmly believe that the best way to effectively tackle a problem such as sexual assault in the military is to have accurate data. The DoD has made several promises that DIBRS, which collects statistics about crimes committed within the military services, would be up and running by now. Congress first mandated that the Pentagon collect crime statistics in 1988. I repeat—Congress told the DoD to do this in 1988. Yet eighteen years later, DIBRS is not slated for completion until June 2007, if we can believe the DoD. This legislation will direct the Secretary of Defense to ensure that DIBRS is fully implemented by January 1, 2007. If DIBRS is not fully implemented by that date, the Secretary's salary will be deducted by \$1,000 each day starting January 1, 2007. I believe that if the DoD will not take it upon itself to make this a priority, we in Congress have a responsibility to see that our mandates are met.