

**CITY COUNCIL**

**The City of Orange Township, New Jersey**

DATE January 2, 2024

NUMBER 1-2024

**TITLE:** A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING JANUARY 1, 2024 AS HAITIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY IN THE CITY OF ORANGE TOWNSHIP. (Sponsored by Council Members Adrienne Wooten & Jamie Summers-Johnson).

**WHEREAS**, in 1659, the French colony of Saint-Domingue — now known as Haiti — was established. The French colonists began setting up sugar and coffee plantations worked by imported bondsmen from Africa. By 1788, the island had over 700,000 bondsmen working in brutal conditions; and

**WHEREAS**, as a result of overwork, lack of proper medical care, inadequate food, clothing, and shelter, the mortality rate far exceeded the birth rate; and

**WHEREAS**, thus, the colonial system in Haiti was described as one of the most brutally-efficient bondsmen colonies and France’s most profitable colonial possession which they called ‘The pearl of the Antilles.’ and

**WHEREAS**, in 1791, the long-seething tensions between the bondsmen and the French planters reached a bloody climax; and

**WHEREAS**, on the night of August 21, 1791, bondsmen started murdering plantation owners and destroying plantations; and

**WHEREAS**, in two months, 4,000 white people were killed and 180 plantations destroyed, the loss of property amounting to about two million Francs; and

**WHEREAS** in September of that same year, the whites began organizing themselves into militias and struck back, leading to the loss of about 15,000 black lives; and

**WHEREAS**, at this point, the bondsmen demanded freedom from slavery and not independence; and

**WHEREAS**, on February 4, 1794, the French National Convention declared the abolition of slavery in all French colonies. However, this didn’t bring about instant transformation as the French later attempted to reimpose slavery, leading to another revolt in 1802; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 18, 1803, the final battle that secured victory for the bondsmen occurred, called the ‘Battle of Vertières’, which marked the first-ever successful slave revolt to lead to the creation of an independent state; and

**WHEREAS**, Haiti proclaimed independence from the French colonial authorities on January 1, 1804. ‘Haiti,’ which in Taino means ‘country of mountains,’ was renamed under the direction of Jean-Jacques Dessalines from Saint Domingue; and

**WHEREAS**, as a result, Haiti became the first independent nation led by a black majority in the post-colonial era and Latin America.



**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Municipal Council of the City of Orange Township recognize January 1, 2024 as Haitian Independence Day.

**Adopted: January 2, 2024**

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**Joyce L. Lanier**  
City Clerk

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**Tency A. Eason**  
Council President