

Committees:

Education
Finance
Health & Aging
Rules & References
Finance Subcommittee
On Higher Education

Statehouse:

Office: (614) 466-5141
FAX: (614) 719-3956
Toll Free: 1-800-282-0253
Rep56@ohiohouse.gov

DAN RAMOS

State Representative
56th House District

State and Local Government Committee

House Bill 589 Testimony
Representative Dan Ramos
May 31st, 2018

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chairman Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes, and Members of the State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 589, legislation to permanently recognize Hispanic & Latino Heritage Month in Ohio between the dates of September 15th through October 15th.

We in the House have recognized this every year for the past several through Resolution. This would put official recognition in the Code. Passing a bill continues that tradition, but also alleviates the need for the House to pass separate legislation twice during every General Assembly.

Originally, National Hispanic Heritage Month was founded as National Hispanic Heritage Week. It was enacted in 1968 by President Lyndon Baines Johnson, to recognize the contributions of people of Hispanic and Latino/a origins to the United States, and celebrate the cultures of Hispanics and Latinos/as part of our shared American Experience.

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan expanded National Hispanic Heritage Week to a month long celebration of the culture and work that people of Hispanic descent contribute to our state. Throughout the decades, Americans of Hispanic descent have proudly defended our country in wars and enriched the lives of all Ohioans through contributions to such fields as business, technology, science, education, religion, entertainment, politics, and the arts.

We chose the 30-day period between mid-September and mid-October to mirror the 30-day period as passed in US Public Law 100-402, sponsored by Rep. Esteban Torres, and signed by President Reagan in 1988. This was an expansion of Hispanic Heritage Week, US Public Law 90-498, sponsored by Rep. George Edward Brown, and signed by President Johnson. It was initially this law, which started the week of September 15.

September 15th was chosen in 1968 as it is the independence day of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua in 1821. Additionally, Mexico celebrates Independence on September 16, Chile, on September 18, and Belize on September 21, so in essence, the dates coincided with the beginning of Hispanic Nations, rather than colonies of the Spanish (and in the case of Belize, formerly British Honduras) and British Empires. Both of the bill sponsors were from California, so it makes sense that the majority of their Hispanic constituencies were of either Mexican or Central American descent, especially in the 1960s and 1980s, respectively.

We are choosing to call it Hispanic & Latino Heritage Month, because that encompasses all of Americans from Latin America (including the Caribbean), in that Hispanic means someone whose origin is a Spanish

speaking country (including Spain), thus excluding for example Brazil (Portuguese), Suriname (Dutch), Guyana (English), and French Guyana (French), whereas Latino means someone whose origin is all of Latin America.

In recognition of these various contributions to our society, I hope you will join us in recognizing National Hispanic Heritage Month here in Ohio.

Thank you for your consideration, Representative Lang and I welcome any questions on this bill.