MARYLAND STATE SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 2 ON THE ROLE PLAYED BY HISPANICS IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

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Approved by the State Legislature on March 31, 1997
Signed by Governor Parris Glendennning on April 8, 1997.

WHEREAS, the Independence of the United States was achieved not only due to the efforts of American patriots, but also to the assistance of foreign governments, soldiers and individuals who supported them, and

WHEREAS, in spite of being an important factor in the victory, the participation of Hispanics in the War of Independence is not mentioned in the history textbooks of this nation, and

WHEREAS, thousands of Hispanics fought the British and their allies during the American Revolution in what today is the United States, winning crucial battles which eased the pressure of the Crown's forces against the armies of General George Washington, and

WHEREAS, Spanish Louisiana Governors' Don Luis de Unzaga and Don Bernardo de Gálvez provided assistance to the revolutionary governments of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia in the form of arms, war materiel, and funds to wage campaigns and protect themselves against the British, and

WHEREAS, this assistance allowed American General George Rogers Clark to wage his successful campaigns west of those colonies and also was instrumental in preventing the British from capturing Forts Pitt and Henry in Pennsylvania and Virginia respectively, which guarded the last leg of the only remaining major patriot supply route at the time, that which originated in Spanish New Orleans, traversed the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers and ended overland in Philadelphia, and

WHEREAS, Don Juan de Miralles, a wealthy Spanish merchant established in Havana, Cuba, was appointed as the Royal Envoy of King Carlos III of Spain to the United States in 1778, and while travelling with his secretary, Don Francisco Rendon, to the revolutionary capital of Philadelphia, he initiated the direct shipment of supplies from Cuba to Baltimore, Maryland; Charleston, South Carolina; and Philadelphia; aside from making significant stopovers in Williamsburg, Virginia, and in North Carolina, and

WHEREAS, after Spain declared war on Britain in June, 1779, the victories of General Don Bernardo de Gálvez in the lower Mississippi and at Baton Rouge, Mobile, and Pensacola dismantled British resupply of close to 10,000 Native-American Warriors who were a major concern for General Washington because of the raids they had been carrying out in the western areas of the colonies, and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Loyalist Regiment, a force comprised of Marylanders from the eastern shore, was also defeated and captured during the campaigns of General Galvez, and

WHEREAS, the victories of General Gálvez resulted, additionally, in the capture of four other British Regiments including; the Pennsylvania Loyalists, the elite British 60th Foot also known as the Royal Americans, the British 16th Foot, and the German Waldeck Regiment, and

WHEREAS, fighting under the command of General Gálvez were men from Spain, Cuba, Mexico, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela, as well as from the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland and from Native American Nations such as the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Creek, and

WHEREAS, The United States Senate has recognized that the actions of those men and their brave commander were very important for the triumph of American efforts in the Carolinas and Georgia, and also for the final victory against Lord Charles Cornwallis in Yorktown, Virginia, and

WHEREAS, the success of the French and American armies at Yorktown would have been difficult to achieve without the donation of 500,000 pounds tournois that were collected in six hours by prominent citizens of Havana, Cuba, for the campaign, and without an additional 1,000,000 pounds that were subsequently donated by King Carlos III of Spain for the same purpose, and,

WHEREAS, the Yorktown Campaign not only consisted of a siege by land but also by sea, undertaken by the French Fleet under Admiral de Grasse, whose ships had been readied and supplied with 100,000 pesos from the Spanish colonies of Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico that were handed over by Spanish authorities to the French for said purpose, and

WHEREAS, an important element in the French naval victory at the Battle of the Virginia Capes, which sealed the fate of Lord Cornwallis army at Yorktown, was the numerical superiority enjoyed by Admiral de Grasse's fleet, which resulted from a Spanish Naval Squadron taking over the protection of the French colonies in the Caribbean to allow the Admiral the benefit of maintaining his fleet intact, and, thus, obtain the superiority in numbers deemed necessary to defeat the British, and

WHEREAS, hardly any of these Hispanic contributions to American Independence are mentioned in the current history textbooks of this nation, be it

RESOLVED, that the Legislature of Maryland acknowledges the pivotal role of Spain and Spanish America for the triumph of the American Revolution, and also recognizes General Bernardo de Gálvez and his men for their significant contributions and achievements in this respect, and, be it further

RESOLVED that the Legislature of Maryland hereby urges historians nationwide to a deeper examination and dissemination of the role played by Hispanics in the accomplishment of American Independence as well as in the development and progress of the United States in general, and that the study of these contributions be made an integral part of the Social Studies and History courses taught in the State.

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