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United States
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UNITED CONFEDERATION OF TAINO PEOPLE DAY

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the taino people and the importance of observing the United Confederation of Taino People Day.

The Taino people are the descendants of the first Native Peoples of the Americas to greet Cristobal Colon (Christopher Columbus) in the year 1492, and have a distinctive spiritual and material relationship with the lands, territories, waters and coastal seas which they have traditionally been connected to, occupied and used from time immemorial.

The Taino people have the collective and individual right to identify themselves as indigenous, to be recognized as such, and to practice, revitalize, develop and transmit to coming generations the past, present and future manifestations of their distinct identity, ethnic, cultural and spiritual traditions, history, language, and customs.

The Taino people, beyond international and political borders, have taken positive steps for the recognition, promotion and protection of their collective and individual rights and freedoms, by organizing themselves for their spiritual, social, political, economic, and cultural enhancement.

The Taino people, being represented by indigenous organizations, such as Ganey Quinto Mundo, Concejo General de Tainos Borincanos, Fundacion Social Luz Cosmica Taina, Presencia Taina, Taino Ancestral Legacy Keepers, Ciboney Tribe, and Cecibajagua, have in solidarity chosen representatives themselves and established the United Confederation of Taino People.

The United Confederation of Taino People is celebrating its first historic anniversary, which coincides with, and recognizes the United Nations International decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, and the equinox that signals the beginning of the planting cycle that the Taino People have observed for thousands of years.

Mr. Speaker, March 27, 1999 is the United Confederation of Taino People Day. I encourage my colleagues and all of the people of the United States to observe that day with the respect and dignity it deserves and to learn more about the great contributions of this people to our country and civilization.