Mr. Speaker,

I rise in support of H.Res.120 which recognizes the African American spiritual as a national treasure.

Enslaved Africans who came to the European colonies were forbidden to speak their native languages, use African musical instruments, or practice their spiritual beliefs. To keep their African traditions alive through songs and stories, the slaves created a new kind of music. Today these are known as spirituals.

Mr. Calvin Earl, my constituent from Jersey City, has devoted his life to educating people about the history and importance of African American spirituals. He started a program called "The Gifts From My Ancestors". Through songs, dances, and storytelling, this program has helped people experience the story of enslaved African Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Mr. Earl for his work and I believe it is time to recognize the importance of these spirituals and preserve them for future generations by voting in favor of H.Res.120. Thank you.

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