

2/7/2007 - Sires Hails Legislation Declaring African-American Spirituals A National Treasure

Rep. Sires congratulates Jersey City resident Calvin Earl for his artistic contribution

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(Washington, D.C.) - Congressman Albio Sires voted today in support of a resolution to recognize the African American spiritual as a national treasure. The music was created by enslaved Africans to keep their traditions alive through songs and stories. The melodies and lyrics, known today as spirituals, have become part of the fabric of America.

"I am proud to be able to contribute to this long overdue recognition," said Congressman Sires. "I am pleased the vote for this resolution took place during Black History Month when we recognize the valuable contributions of African Americans to our great nation."

Congressman Sires also recognized Jersey City resident Calvin Earl in a speech he gave today on the floor of the House of Representatives in support of the resolution. Mr. Earl, a musician and storyteller, has made it his life's mission to educate others through entertainment about the rich history of the African American spirituals.

"I congratulate Calvin Earl for devoting his talents to teaching an essential part of our country's history. The beauty of the African American spirituals and their messages enrich our lives, and will now be preserved for future generations," said Congressman Sires.