

2017 -- S 0620

LC002208

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

SENATE RESOLUTION

CONGRATULATING RHODE ISLAND NATIVE BILLY GILMAN ON HIS SINGING
CAREER AND FINISHING AS RUNNER-UP ON THE VOICE

Introduced By: Senators Morgan, Algieri, Kettle, Gee, and Paolino

Date Introduced: March 16, 2017

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, William Wendell Gilman, III, known professionally as "Billy Gilman", was
2 born on May 24, 1988, in Westerly, Rhode Island, the son of Frances "Fran" Woodmansee and
3 William Wendell Gilman, Jr. Billy was raised in the Town of Richmond along with his younger
4 brother Colin; and

5 WHEREAS, Billy was a precocious youngster who loved singing from an early age. As a
6 toddler, Billy would sing for friends and family using his toy karaoke machine, wowing them
7 with his incredible voice and natural ability. By the age of 5, Billy would delight in shopping with
8 his mom at a Westerly supermarket, and would stick his head inside the door of a frozen food
9 case, and sing to see if the echo would make him sound like he was on a stage. He liked what he
10 heard and he scribbled on the condensation of the glass door the words, "Now Starring: Billy
11 Gilman!"; and

12 WHEREAS, Billy gave his first public performance on a stage at the age of seven. Billy
13 Gilman later performed at the Washington County Fair in Richmond and other local fairgrounds
14 in the New England area. Billy endeared himself to his audience as the little boy in a towering
15 cowboy hat, possessing an amazingly big voice as he strutted around the stage. His grandmother
16 Ginger Woodmansee realized that other people might delight in hearing the 8-year old prodigy
17 sing, and thus she contacted Angela Bacari, a Westerly vocal coach and singer in her own right,
18 to help manage his career; and

19 WHEREAS, Billy was discovered at the age of nine by Ray Benson of "Asleep at the

1 Wheel." Billy went to Austin, Texas, to work with Ray and made some demos of songs that
2 Benson shopped around, taking him on the road with the Dixie Chicks and George Strait. Next
3 were tours with Reba McEntire, as well as performances with Tim McGraw and Martina
4 McBride; and

5 WHEREAS, Billy Gilman was later signed by Epic Records in Nashville and by the age
6 of eleven, he had recorded a debut album titled "One Voice". The title song from that album, also
7 titled "One Voice", went on to become a top 40 hit on the Billboard Hot 100 and a Top 20 hit on
8 the Billboard Hot Country songs chart in 2000; and

9 WHEREAS, The memorable "One Voice" video shows Billy on a school bus going home
10 from school while watching everything that goes on around him. Billy sang in his lyrics about the
11 power of prayer: "We need some help, down here on earth, a thousand prayers, a million words.
12 One voice, One simple word, Hearts know what to say. One dream can change the world, Keep
13 believing." Billy was nominated that year for a Grammy Award for Best Male Country Vocal
14 Performance, and at 11-years old was the youngest artist to ever have a Top 40 single on the
15 Billboard country chart; and

16 WHEREAS, Billy Gilman released a Christmas album in 2000 titled "Classic
17 Christmas" which went gold, followed on May 8, 2001 by his second album "Dare to Dream,"
18 which was certified gold, with the singles "Elisabeth" and "She's My Girl" peaking at positions 50
19 and 56 respectively on the Billboard Country Music charts. After "Dare to Dream," Billy's voice
20 began to mature, forcing him temporarily to withdraw from singing; and

21 WHEREAS, His final album for Epic was released on April 15, 2003, and was entitled
22 "Music Through HeartSongs: Songs Based on the Poems of Mattie J. T. Stepanek." The tracks
23 were based on the verse written by the child poet Mattie Stepanek, a young writer with muscular
24 dystrophy who died in 2004, almost one year after the album's release. Billy then signed a
25 contract with Image Entertainment in 2005 for the release of his fifth album, "Everything and
26 More". In 2006, a self-titled album "Billy Gilman" was released; and

27 WHEREAS, In 2016, Billy Gilman auditioned for season 11 of the NBC television show
28 The Voice. In the blind audition broadcast on September 20, 2016, he sang the song "When We
29 Were Young," by Adele and achieved his goal of having all four judges turn their chairs to try to
30 get him on their team of talented singers. Billy then began his quest to win the competition as a
31 member of Team Adam with Adam Levine as his coach and mentor; and

32 WHEREAS, Billy Gilman continued to impress the judges in the early rounds with his
33 flawless renditions of numerous songs including "The Show Must Go On" by Queen, "All I Ask"
34 by Adele, and "Anyway" by Martina McBride, earning a standing ovation from the public and all

1 four judges after each performance, and advancing to the semi-finals; and

2 WHEREAS, In the semi-finals, Billy Gilman earned another standing ovation from all
3 four judges for his performance of "I Surrender" by Celine Dion and his performance of the song
4 was featured at Number One on iTunes. In the finals, he performed "My Way" by Frank Sinatra,
5 "Bye Bye Love" by the Everly Brothers as a duet with his coach and mentor, Adan Levine, and
6 closed out the competition with a rendition of his original song "Because of Me"; and

7 WHEREAS, In recognition of his extraordinary talent and beautiful singing voice, Billy
8 Gilman was named the runner-up on The Voice Season 11 competition; now, therefore be it

9 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
10 hereby congratulates Rhode Island native Billy Gilman for his outstanding performance in the
11 2016 season of the television show, The Voice. We wish him much continued success as a
12 recording artist and look forward to seeing him perform in his home state of Rhode Island and
13 across this great nation; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
15 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Billy Gilman.

=====
LC002208
=====