

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 719

By Jones

A RESOLUTION to recognize legendary singer-songwriter and civil rights activist Joan Baez on the occasion of her eighty-third birthday.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to pay tribute to those citizens who are celebrating special occasions in their estimable lives; and

WHEREAS, on January 9, 2024, singer-songwriter and activist Joan Baez celebrated her eighty-third birthday, an opportune moment to reflect on a life well lived and to anticipate the good still to come; and

WHEREAS, born in Staten Island, New York, Joan Baez spent her childhood singing in local choirs; she graduated from high school in Los Angeles, California, before moving back east with her family and attending Boston University; and

WHEREAS, her calling to music, however, precipitated an exit from collegiate life, and she began singing in local coffee houses and at festivals, finding a wide audience during her Newport Folk Festival performances in 1959 and 1960 and later with television performances in support of her albums, including her eponymous debut release in 1960; and

WHEREAS, such was her talent and passion that she became a key player in the folk music revival of the 1960s, alongside the likes of counterpart and frequent duet partner Bob Dylan; beyond simply using her filigree soprano to popularize traditional ballads, Joan Baez lifted her voice in support of some of the most important social justice efforts of her time; and

WHEREAS, in 1963, she sang the civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome" at the now-legendary March on Washington, in addition to singing at various other civil rights marches and rallies through the mid-1960s, and she used her music to call for an end to the conflict in

Vietnam; the call for non-violence and the promotion of social justice became common threads that run through much of her oeuvre; and

WHEREAS, in 1965, Ms. Baez founded the Institute for the Study of Non-Violence in Carmel, California; throughout the ensuing decades, she remained committed to her craft and to her social justice efforts in tandem, traveling in Hanoi, North Vietnam, in December 1972 to deliver Christmas presents and mail to American prisoners of war, during the most intense bombing campaign of the conflict, and releasing her album *Where Are You Now, My Son?* the following year, the title track of which is a twenty-three-minute spoken-word piece punctuated with sound clips that she recorded during the bombing; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Baez continues to lend her voice to a variety of worthy causes; she was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2017 and received a Kennedy Center Honor in 2021. She is also the author of two books, *Daybreak* (1968), an autobiography, and a memoir titled *And a Voice to Sing With* (1987); and

WHEREAS, Joan Baez has devoted the vast majority of her more than eight decades of life to uplifting others through song and ensuring that our country is a more just, circumspect, and compassionate place for all citizens; and

WHEREAS, it is most fitting that we celebrate the life and legacy of one of America's most talented and ardent artists and civil rights activists; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we recognize legendary singer-songwriter Joan Baez on the occasion of her eighty-third birthday, commending her for her lifetime of civil rights activism and extending our best wishes for every continued success and many happy returns of the day.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to

the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.