

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 784

By Towns

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize the musical talents of Bobby Rush.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should pause to pay tribute to those noteworthy musicians who, through their extraordinary talents, have earned the universal respect of their peers and their fans; and

WHEREAS, one such outstanding musician who has become a permanent fixture of American music is Bobby Rush; and

WHEREAS, nationally known as an unparalleled performer, Bobby Rush possesses an impressive body of work that spans over five decades; and

WHEREAS, a 2006 inductee to the Blues Hall of Fame, Bobby Rush has achieved the pinnacle of success in his musical career, which began when he was in his early teens; and

WHEREAS, born Emmet Ellis, Jr., on November 10, 1933, in Haynesville, Louisiana, Bobby Rush moved to Chicago in the 1950s, where his bands included such legendary musicians as Freddie King, Earl Hooker, and Luther Allison; he also frequently visited his family home in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, where he would perform with other great artists, including Elmore James; and

WHEREAS, having already gained remarkable popularity as a performer in Chicago, Bobby Rush began to achieve national acclaim in 1971 following the success of his hit "Chicken Heads" on Galaxy Records; over the next decade he toured widely and recorded for a number of labels, including Jewel, Philadelphia International, and Warner Brothers; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1980s, Bobby Rush moved to his current home of Jackson, Mississippi, where he recorded a series of albums for the LeJam, Ichiban, and Malaco labels,

and gained the title of “king of the chitlin circuit” in the wake of hits including “Sue,” “Wearin’ It Out,” “Ain’t Studdin’ You,” and “Hoochie Man”; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, Bobby Rush fulfilled his dream of forming his own label, Deep Rush, and also had his music featured in Martin Scorsese’s film series “The Blues”; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, Bobby Rush became the first blues artist to perform in China, earning him the title International Dean of the Blues; he was later named Friendship Ambassador to the Great Wall of China after performing the largest concert ever held at that landmark; and

WHEREAS, though he continues to wow his audiences with his stellar showmanship to this day, gaining new audiences through performances at the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall and in Europe and Japan, Bobby Rush has never forgotten his roots; and

WHEREAS, meeting once with Dr. Martin Luther King in Chicago, Bobby Rush is celebrated as a civil rights warrior in the Soulful Journey exhibit of the National Civil Rights Museum, having integrated a Chicago nightclub and given money and loaned his tour bus to register voters; and

WHEREAS, a benevolent person who is always willing to lend a helping hand to those less fortunate, Bobby Rush, along with his beloved wife, has assisted at-risk youth and supported prison ministry; he has also traveled to Iraq to entertain our troops; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Bobby Rush for his incomparable service in producing exceptional music; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and recognize the extraordinary musical talents of Bobby Rush and extend to him our best wishes for much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.