

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1236

By Parkinson

A RESOLUTION to recognize and honor legendary R&B singer and songwriter KEM.

WHEREAS, it is the privilege of the members of this General Assembly to recognize those individuals who are wholly devoted to excellence in their creative endeavors, thereby contributing to the cultural landscape of this State and nation and enriching the lives of their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, one such individual is legendary R&B singer and songwriter KEM, whose remarkable twenty-year career has enthralled and inspired music lovers the world over; and

WHEREAS, his trajectory into the annals of R&B history is a heroic one; born in Nashville and raised in Detroit, Michigan, KEM spent a portion of his young adult life on the streets of Detroit, going between homeless shelters and drug rehabilitation centers prior to attaining sobriety in 1995; and

WHEREAS, guided by his unwavering faith, KEM ascended from the deep grasp of addiction and homelessness, working blue-collar jobs while perfecting his songwriting and ultimately finding himself among the legendary icons etched atop Motown's marquee of music history; and

WHEREAS, counting piano as his refuge and solace, KEM has been nurturing his relationship with music since childhood, guided by the influence of artists such as Al Jarreau, Anita Baker, Chaka Khan, Earl Klugh, Prince, and Michael Jackson, whose dance moves he tried on for size as a child; and

WHEREAS, KEM released his first album, *Kemistry*, independently on February 28, 2002, selling an impressive 15,000 units out of the trunk of his car; in November of that same year, Motown Records signed him to a five-record deal and re-released his debut album in

2003, with his first hit, "Love Calls," racing to the top of the Urban Adult Contemporary chart and remaining in heavy rotation on R&B stations even to this day; and

WHEREAS, continuing to transform his most private emotions into song, KEM released his second record, *Album II*, which debuted as certified Gold in May 2005 and was certified Platinum in 2014; the album's first single, "I Can't Stop Loving You," was *Billboard's* undisputed Top Adult R&B Single of the Year, and the second single, "Find Your Way (Back in My Life)," peaked at No. 3 on the UAC charts; and

WHEREAS, his full discography includes 2010's *Intimacy: Album III*, which is certified Gold, *What Christmas Means* (2012), *Promise to Love* (2014), and *Love Always Wins* (2020); he has produced eight No. 1 singles and garnered three Grammy nominations—two in 2011 for "Why Would You Stay" in the Best Male R&B Vocal Performance and Best R&B Song categories and one in 2014 for "Nobody" in the Best Traditional R&B Performance category; and

WHEREAS, known for his distinctively transfixing vocals and redemptive, hook-laden music that fuses R&B, soul, and jazz, KEM has evolved as a dominant force whose sold-out national tours and international shows have led to his becoming one of today's most coveted and successful touring artists; and

WHEREAS, he has enthralled millions through his captivating performances during Super Bowl XL sponsor events, at the BET Awards, during Black Music Month at the White House, on the Tom Joyner Fantastic Voyage Cruise, during Stevie Wonder's House Full of Toys concert, and at the *Essence* Music Festival in New Orleans, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, KEM's talents are often sought out by filmmakers; he penned "Tonight," which is included on the popular soundtrack of Tyler Perry's *Madea's Family Reunion*, and his remake of Nat King Cole's "Fascination" is featured in the Antonio Banderas film *Take the Lead*.

He made his acting debut in the 2011 remake of the 1976 classic *Sparkle*, starring alongside Jordin Sparks, Mike Epps, and Whitney Houston; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his contributions through song, KEM has given back to others through philanthropic endeavors; in 2012, he founded Mack & Third, Inc., a nonprofit organization built on the guiding premise that no basic human need should go unmet due to lack of resources; the organization provides funding to humanitarian aid organizations related to homelessness, hunger, substance abuse, domestic violence, natural disasters, and education, among other worthy causes; and

WHEREAS, the Mack & Third event, an all-day concert fundraiser and food drive to benefit and recognize Detroit's homeless citizens, has featured renowned artists such as The O'Jays and provided free hot meals and canned goods to thousands in need; and

WHEREAS, for his humanitarian work, KEM has been honored with the Frederick Douglass Award by the New York Urban League and the Community Service Award by the Detroit Urban League; and

WHEREAS, KEM has touched the lives of millions with his disarmingly honest lyrics, billowing voice, and magnanimous charm, as well as his generous spirit; and

WHEREAS, KEM is treasured as one of the redefining voices of contemporary music, and his artistic contributions will continue to resound through the ages; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we recognize and honor legendary R&B singer and songwriter KEM, extending our gratitude for his many artistic contributions over the years and our best wishes for his continued success.

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.