

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 771

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to recognize Bill Gaither for his musical achievements.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to commend those exceptional artists who, through their extraordinary musical talents, have earned the respect and admiration of their peers and fans alike; and

WHEREAS, one such accomplished artist is gospel music icon Bill Gaither, whose influence on gospel music as a singer and songwriter spans the generations and who recently celebrated his eightieth birthday on March 28, 2016; and

WHEREAS, Bill Gaither formed his first group, The Bill Gaither Trio in 1956, while he was attending college; in 1962, he married Gloria Sickal, and the couple decided to make singing, recording, and writing gospel music their full-time career; and

WHEREAS, the collaborations of Bill and Gloria Gaither have resulted in more than 700 popular gospel songs, including "Because He Lives" and "He Touched Me," which was named one of the Top Ten Songs of the Century written by an Indiana Hoosier by *The Indianapolis Star*, and

WHEREAS, in the 1980s, Bill Gaither founded the Gaither Vocal Band, which has raised the bar for gospel quartets and touched audiences all around the world for more than thirty years; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, the Gaither Vocal Band recorded a song with other gospel music icons. That recording led to the creation of Gaither Music Group's Homecoming Video Series; forty million DVDs and CDs in the Gaither Music Group have been sold and 130 videos have received precious metal status by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA); and

WHEREAS, in addition to singing and songwriting, Bill Gaither is a published author, sharing his perspective on life and music through his autobiography, *It's More Than the Music*; and

WHEREAS, Mr. and Mrs. Gaither have collectively garnered eight Grammy Awards and a dozen nominations, and have received two dozen Gospel Music Association Dove Awards; they were the first musical artists to be inducted into the Christian Booksellers Association's Hall of Honor, and they are also members of the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, the Southern Gospel Music Hall of Fame, and the Indiana Broadcast Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Bill and Gloria Gaither have been named Songwriters of the Century by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers; they were the recipients of the Indiana Historical Society's Living Legend Award in 2006, and Bill Gaither is an honorary member of the Barbershop Harmony Society; and

WHEREAS, with performances in the world-renowned venues of Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, and the Sydney Opera House, Mr. Gaither's influence on gospel music is truly incomparable, with his music serving as an inspiration to generations of artists, musicians, and fans alike; and

WHEREAS, it is most fitting that this General Assembly should pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Bill Gaither for his many contributions to gospel music; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor Bill Gaither for his many contributions to gospel music, salute his talent as a performing artist and songwriter, and recognize his singular contributions to gospel music.

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