

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 926

By Walley

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend acclaimed musician and singer-songwriter William "Billy" Weir.

WHEREAS, it is the privilege of the members of this General Assembly to recognize those Tennesseans who are wholly devoted to their craft and enrich the lives of their fellow citizens through their artistic and cultural contributions; and

WHEREAS, one such individual is William "Billy" Weir, a drummer, songwriter, recording artist, and author who came of age during the birth of rock and roll, actively helping to shape the genre and forever leaving his mark on American music; and

WHEREAS, born in Jackson in 1940, Billy Weir moved to Memphis in 1955 and graduated from Humes High School in 1958; during his high school years, he began playing drums with local groups, appearing on Wink Martindale's *Dance Party* in 1956; and

WHEREAS, Harold Jenkins, who would go on to adopt the stage name Conway Twitty and become one of country music's biggest stars, saw Mr. Weir on *Dance Party* and asked him to join him and his band on the road; after his parents agreed, fifteen-year-old Billy Weir commenced his musical journey, touring through Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee, and Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Weir went on to record with Conway Twitty at Sun Records and on all the Mercury sessions, and he sat in on sessions for the likes of Jack Clements, Bill Justis, and Barbara Pittman; although he started out as a drummer, he later became an accomplished guitarist after receiving instruction from guitar legends such as Scotty Moore; and

WHEREAS, over the course of his career, he backed up or appeared on shows with artists such as Elvis Presley, Ronnie Hawkins, and Grand Old Opry acts that include the Big

Bopper, Waylon Jennings, the Statler Brothers, Little Jimmy Dickens, Johnny Cash, June Carter Cash, Carl Perkins, and Tex Ritter; and

WHEREAS, Billy Weir recorded a 45 RPM single in 1971 on a Nashville label that featured two songs written by West Tennessee singer-songwriter Rayburn Anthony, "Don't Follow Me" and "A Hundred Years"; he later released an album titled *A & Ω, the First and Last*; and

WHEREAS, recognized internationally by rock and roll historians, Mr. Weir has been recognized as one of Sun Records' greatest drummers and has been inducted into the International Rockabilly Hall of Fame in Jackson and the Rockabilly Hall of Fame & Museum in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, he has chronicled his life in music through two separate volumes, *Rock A Billy: A Slice of Rock N Roll History* and *Rock A Billy: Here We Go Again*, and is the owner of Gumball Studio, where he wears the hats of engineer, producer, and musician; and

WHEREAS, in his twenties, he began to explore writing songs of his own, and they are finally being released in 2024 with the LP *Here We Go Again*, a compilation of his work spanning more than six decades; the album includes twelve original songs, one of which is a remix of a song that features Conway Twitty and the original band as accompaniment from the early 1970s; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should honor Tennessee's own Billy Weir, a music industry legend who has brought much pride to his home state; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend William "Billy" Weir for his outstanding achievements as a musician and songwriter, congratulate him upon his new

album release, and extend to him our best wishes for continued success in all his future endeavors.

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.