

118TH CONGRESS
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S. RES. 702

Recognizing the contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans to the musical heritage of the United States and designating May 2024 as “Latin Music Appreciation Month”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 23, 2024

Mr. LUJÁN (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans to the musical heritage of the United States and designating May 2024 as “Latin Music Appreciation Month”.

Whereas Latin music styles such as rancheras, corridos, mariachi, salsa, merengue, bachata, cumbia, reggaeton, urban, cumbia, tango, and a multitude of others, and their fusion with other genres, such as jazz, rock, hip hop, and pop, have played a pivotal role in enriching the cultural fabric of the United States, influencing everything from music and dance to fashion and entertainment;

Whereas Latin music, characterized by its vibrant rhythms, rich melodies, and diverse instrumentation, encompasses

a wide array of musical styles and genres originating from Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as their respective diasporas around the world;

Whereas the rich musical traditions of Latin America and the Caribbean were deeply influenced by indigenous cultures, European colonization, particularly Spanish and Portuguese, the legacy of African slavery, and the vibrant cultural heritage of each region and country, all of which contributed to the development of diverse genres in the United States;

Whereas the roots of Mexican music in the United States can be traced back to rich musical traditions that existed in Mexico before the annexation of Mexican territories, including present-day New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming, by the United States following the Mexican-American War;

Whereas, throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, various waves of Mexican immigrants came to the United States for work, particularly in agriculture, mining, and railroad construction, settling in regions such as Texas, California, Arizona, and New Mexico, and bringing their music with them;

Whereas Mexican music in the United States encompasses various regional styles, including ranchera, norteño, tejano, conjunto, mariachi, and corridos, originating from different parts of Mexico but popularized and adapted within Mexican-American communities in the United States;

Whereas the lifestyle and the social issues that Mexicans faced are reflected in corridos, a music genre that originated during the Mexican War of Independence and the

Mexican Revolution, spreading to the southwestern frontier of the United States and contributing to the development of Tejano and New Mexican music,

Whereas mariachi music stems from the traditional ‘son jaliscience’, and was initially played by field hands working at haciendas and humble street performers, and was subsequently promoted by the Government of Mexico in the early 1920s;

Whereas mariachi ensembles, which can include violins, accordions, trumpets, guitars, and singers, have since been prominently featured in a myriad of cultural celebrations, including birthday festivities, quinceañeras, and weddings, and in prestigious concert halls;

Whereas banda, a style of Mexican music characterized by wind instruments including primarily brass and percussion, has its roots dating back to the mid-19th century, with the introduction of piston brass instruments, as community musicians sought to emulate military bands, and encompasses a fusion of traditional dance rhythms such as polka, cumbia, son, and waltz, and notable performers in the genre include Jenny Rivera, Chalino, Banda MS, and Banda El Recodo;

Whereas Caribbean Latin music has had influences in the United States since the mid to late 1800s, with notable contributions from composers like Ignacio Piñero, Louis Moreau Gottschalk, and Ignacio Cervantes, whose works helped introduce Latin rhythms and melodies to audiences in the United States;

Whereas the Cuban version of the habanera, exposed to New Orleans in the 19th century, laid the foundation for the

appreciation of Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Dominican musical styles in the United States;

Whereas Cuban immigration to the United States, spurred by communism as a result of the Cuban Revolution and the Castro dictatorship, has fostered cultural exchanges that contributed to the development of new musical genres, most prominently in Florida;

Whereas, in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico became a United States territory, granting its people citizenship and fostering a unique cultural exchange between Puerto Ricans and individuals in the mainland United States, which culminated in a significant migration wave of Puerto Ricans to cities like New York in the mid-20th century;

Whereas the establishment of Spanish-language newspapers, such as *La Prensa* in New York City in 1913, contributed to the dissemination of Latin music and culture among tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans and immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean who migrated to New York City;

Whereas a convergence of Puerto Rican, Cuban, and other Caribbean immigrants, particularly in New York City, infused music in the United States with Afro-Cuban rhythms and jazz improvisation and gave rise to the vibrant musical genre of salsa in the United States, which left a lasting mark on the cultural landscape of the United States;

Whereas the introduction of Afro-Cuban music, including the rumba by Don Azpiazu's Havana Casino Orchestra in the 1930s, sparked a Latin music craze in the United States

with hits like “Peanut Vendor” by Moises Simons becoming national sensations;

Whereas, by the close of the 1940s, Latin music had firmly established its presence in the United States, influencing various genres and becoming an integral part of the musical heritage of the United States;

Whereas Tito Puente, a Puerto Rican musical luminary known as both the “King of Mambo” and the “King of Latin Music”, left an indelible mark on the world of Latin music through his groundbreaking compositions, including the iconic “Oye Como Va”, famously popularized by Carlos Santana;

Whereas Puente’s innovative blend of Cuban and Caribbean sounds such as mambo, son, and cha-cha-chá resonated with mainstream audiences, solidifying his status as a cultural icon both in the United States and internationally;

Whereas, in 1959, Ritchie Valens became a trailblazer in the music industry with his iconic rendition of the song “La Bamba” becoming the first Latin song to enter the Hot 100 Billboard chart, marking a significant milestone for Chicano Rock;

Whereas Celia Cruz, the incomparable “Queen of Salsa” and a pioneer of Afro-Cuban music, infused traditional guarachas with modern flair, elevated the genre to global acclaim with timeless classics like “La Vida Es un Carnaval”, and left an enduring legacy in the realm of Latin music;

Whereas Celia Cruz served as a musical ambassador with her dynamic performances and impassioned vocals that tran-

scended cultural boundaries, solidifying her status as a global icon;

Whereas Johnny Pacheco, revered as the “Grandfather of Salsa”, emerged as a leading figure in the vibrant New York salsa scene during the 1960s and 1970s, contributing significantly to the genre’s development, and served as the musical director of Fania Records;

Whereas Los Tigres del Norte, a Mexican band renowned for their poignant portrayal of social issues and immigrant experiences in the United States through songs like “La jaula de oro” and “América”, have been honored with multiple Grammy awards, contributing significantly to the popularization of the corridos genre within the United States starting in 1968 and continuing to the present day;

Whereas Vicente Fernandez, a singer, actor, film producer, and the “King of Ranchera Music”, made significant contributions to ranchera music, earning him Grammy and Latin Grammy awards, selling over 50,000,000 records, and receiving the title of the greatest Mexican singer of all time by Rolling Stone;

Whereas Alejandro Fernandez, “El Potrillo”, continues the legacy of ranchera music, having sold over 20,000,000 albums across the world;

Whereas Gloria Estefan, a Cuban-American singer, songwriter, actress, Grammy award winner, and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient, emerged as a pioneering figure in Latin pop music during the 1980s and 1990s, achieving international acclaim with hits such as “Conga” , which fused Latin rhythms with contemporary

pop sensibilities, and her contributions to the genre helped propel Latin music into the mainstream;

Whereas Emilio Estefan, a prominent and visionary figure in the Latin music industry, has made significant contributions to the genre as an award-winning songwriter, producer, musician, mentor, and entrepreneur, and was the first artist to receive the grand distinction of Person of the Year during the Latin Grammy Awards in 2000;

Whereas, from establishing the Miami Sound Machine to working with renowned artists such as Gloria Estefan, Marc Anthony, Alejandro Fernandez, Jon Secada, Ricky Martin, Jennifer Lopez, and Shakira, Emilio Estefan's influence has been instrumental in defining Latin crossover and introducing Latin rhythms and culture to mainstream audiences worldwide;

Whereas Selena Quintanilla, known as the "Queen of Tejano Music", left a profound and enduring impact on the United States through her distinctive fusion of Tejano music with contemporary pop and R&B, captivating audiences across the United States and beyond as a Mexican-American artist, and her legacy continues beyond the 1980s and 1990s, resonating with fans to this day;

Whereas bachata, with its blend of European, indigenous Taino, and African elements, reflects the rich cultural heritage of the Dominican Republic;

Whereas the pioneering work of the band Aventura, originating in New York, played a significant role in popularizing the genre of bachata in the United States, garnering widespread popularity and acclaim;

Whereas Cuban reggaeton and tropical duo Gente de Zona, which emerged from the streets of the island and is now

a world-renowned group, transcended barriers to ignite hope for the people of Cuba with their historic Spanish hip-hop song “Patria y Vida,” authored by Yotuel and Beatriz Luengo;

Whereas Maná is considered the most influential Latino rock band and is one of the best-selling Latin music artists in the world, with over 25,000,000 records sold worldwide, and was the first band ever to be recognized as Person of the Year during the Latin Grammy Awards;

Whereas Juan Luis Guerra was the first artist ever to receive a Latin Grammy Award during the first televised Latin Grammy Award ceremony for “Ni Es Lo Mismo Ni Es Igual”;

Whereas Latin music has continued to evolve and incorporate diverse styles and influences from various countries and regions, and has been popularized by artists like Shakira, Maná, Vicente Fernandez, Alejandro Fernandez, Juan Gabriel, J Balvin, Ozuna, Jennifer Lopez, Pitbull, Karol G, Peso Pluma, Pepe Aguilar, and Bad Bunny, among many others;

Whereas Daddy Yankee, a Puerto Rican artist, emerged as a pioneer of reggaeton, a genre blending Caribbean rhythms with hip-hop and reggae influences, and played a pivotal role in elevating reggaeton to a global phenomenon in the early 2000s, with his groundbreaking hits, including “Gasolina” and “Despacito”, the largest globally streamed Spanish song to date;

Whereas the Latin Grammy Award ceremony was the first bilingual primetime program to be aired on an English-language television network in the United States, and it celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2024;

Whereas the Latin Grammy Foundation is a global champion for music education and empowers communities through Latin music and culture, successfully cultivating the next generation of Latin music creators through various scholarships, educational programs and grants, and educational opportunities that advance Latin music and its heritage;

Whereas People en Español is one of the most trusted voices in Hispanic culture that, for almost 30 years, has celebrated Latin music and culture, covering in its pages and digital space the evolution of Latin music, singers, and musicians who have captivated a worldwide audience;

Whereas Leila Cobo is considered one of the world's leading authorities in Latin music, as the first journalist based in the United States to prominently cover Latin music daily, and has been instrumental in transforming its coverage and perception in the United States;

Whereas, according to the Recording Industry Association of America, Latin music earned a record-breaking \$1,400,000,000 in 2023, following all-time high revenues in 2022;

Whereas Latin music artists have significantly contributed to cross-cultural exchanges, civic participation, political movements, and philanthropy, utilizing their influential platforms to advocate for social causes and engage with diverse communities;

Whereas the Hispanic population in the United States has grown significantly, accounting for approximately 19 percent of the total population as of the 2020 Census, and continues to contribute to the rich cultural tapestry of the United States;

Whereas continued influence and cultural exchange between the United States and the Spanish-speaking world, including Mexico, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Guatemala, Venezuela, Honduras, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, and Spain, continues to elevate the cultural importance of Latin music in the United States; and

Whereas Latino culture, including its vibrant music traditions, is celebrated and honored at events such as Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations, Latin music festivals, and other cultural gatherings throughout the United States, showcasing the enduring influence and significance of Latin music and heritage in the society of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates May 2024 as “Latin Music Ap-
3 preciation Month”; and

4 (2) recognizes—

5 (A) the importance of music produced,
6 written, and performed by Hispanic and Latino
7 Americans to the musical heritage of the United
8 States;

9 (B) the Hispanic and Latino musical art-
10 ists, composers, songwriters, and musicians
11 whose contributions to music are underrecog-
12 nized;

13 (C) the achievements, talent, and hard
14 work of Hispanic and Latino pioneer artists,

1 and the obstacles that those artists overcame to
2 gain recognition;

3 (D) the importance of celebrating and up-
4 lifting music made by Hispanic and Latino art-
5 ists to understand the contributions that His-
6 panic and Latino artists have made to the fab-
7 ric of history and art in the United States; and

8 (E) National Hispanic Heritage Month
9 and Latin Music Appreciation Month as an im-
10 portant time to—

11 (i) celebrate the impact of Latin
12 music on the musical heritage of the
13 United States; and

14 (ii) encourage greater awareness of
15 the cultural importance and history of
16 Latin music so that Latino and Hispanic
17 history and culture can be preserved.

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