

By: Senator(s) Flowers

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 565

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION POSTHUMOUSLY COMMENDING ROBERT
2 JOHNSON UPON HIS RECEIPT OF THE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD AT THE
3 48TH ANNUAL GRAMMY CEREMONY.

4 WHEREAS, 70 years after the iconic musician's death in
5 Greenwood, Mississippi, Robert Johnson will receive a Lifetime
6 Achievement Award at the 48th Annual Grammy Ceremony on Wednesday,
7 February 8, 2006, in Los Angeles, California; and

8 WHEREAS, blues musician Robert Johnson was born May 8, 1911,
9 in Hazlehurst, Mississippi, and died August 16, 1938, in
10 Greenwood, Mississippi. He was 27 and had recorded a total of 42
11 songs; and

12 WHEREAS, often described as "the greatest blues singer of all
13 time," Johnson has influenced musicians from the Rolling Stones to
14 Bob Dylan to the Grateful Dead, Eric Clapton and Cream, on down to
15 The White Stripes; and

16 WHEREAS, in 1990, when the complete set of his recordings was
17 released in a CD box set as *Robert Johnson, The Complete*
18 *Recordings*, on Columbia/Legacy, it was the first blues album in
19 history to sell more than 2 million copies. Today his music,
20 coupled with his storied life and death, still captivate; and

21 WHEREAS, he didn't live to see 30 years and recorded only 29
22 songs on 42 tracks, including "Me and The Devil Blues," "Crossroad
23 Blues," "Rambling On My Mind," "Traveling Riverside Blues," "Love
24 In Vain," "32-20 Blues," "Milkcow's Calf Blues," "They're Red
25 Hot," "Kindhearted Woman Blues," "Come On In My Kitchen," "I'm A
26 Steady Rollin' Man" and "Sweet Home Chicago"; and

27 WHEREAS, the story of Robert Johnson, the nomadic bluesman
28 who died penniless at age 27 in Greenwood, has been written,
29 filmed and discussed for decades. You can't mention him without
30 hearing the legend that Johnson sold his soul to the devil at a
31 crossroads in Clarksdale, or Rosedale, or Greenwood, in exchange
32 for his musical genius; and

33 WHEREAS, stories of Johnson's cause of death in 1938 vary.
34 Some people say he was given some poisoned moonshine by a jealous
35 husband. There are also disputes about his burial site in the
36 Delta, three sites are often mentioned, but many believe the grave
37 on Money Road in the Little Zion Missionary Baptist Church
38 Cemetery is the place where Johnson rests; and

39 WHEREAS, the 4-foot-tall granite headstone placed there in
40 the late 1990s sits at the foot of a pecan tree. It is inscribed
41 with Johnson's name, birth and death dates. In the center is a
42 note that Johnson is reported to have scribbled on his death bed.
43 It reads, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of Jerusalem, I know that my
44 Redeemer liveth and that He will call me from the grave." On any
45 given day throughout the year, Johnson fans can be found there
46 paying homage; and

47 WHEREAS, this recognition is long overdue and we are very
48 proud that his music is loved and recognized worldwide, bringing
49 honor to the blues culture and to the State of Mississippi:

50 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
51 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
52 we do hereby posthumously commend Robert Johnson upon his receipt
53 of the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 48th Annual Grammy
54 Ceremony in Los Angeles, California, and express our appreciation
55 for this long overdue recognition.

56 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
57 his son, Claud Johnson, Crystal Springs, Mississippi, and be made
58 available to the Capital Press Corps.