

By: Senator(s) Jackson (11th), Horhn,  
Barnett, Blackmon, Butler, Dawkins, Frazier,  
Jackson (32nd), Jordan, Norwood, Simmons  
(12th), Simmons (13th), Turner-Ford,  
Witherspoon, Burton, Clarke

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 556

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE LOSS AND COMMENDING THE  
2 MUSIC CAREER OF MISSISSIPPI BLUES AND SOUL LEGEND DENISE LASALLE.

3 WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we note the passing of  
4 renowned Mississippi R&B Singer, Songwriter and Record Producer  
5 Denise LaSalle (78) on January 8, 2018. Denise LaSalle was a  
6 durable Blues and Soul Singer and Songwriter who in a  
7 half-century-long career delved into song, love, cheating,  
8 pleasure and heartache, mixing romance with fun; and

9 WHEREAS, Ms. LaSalle was born Ora Denise Allen on July 6,  
10 1939, near Sidon in Leflore County in the Mississippi Delta. She  
11 moved with her family to the Delta Town of Belzoni when she was  
12 seven. She sang in church and listened to country music and blues  
13 on the radio. At the age of 13, she moved on her own to Chicago,  
14 where she sang with a Gospel Group, the Sacred Five. Hoping to be  
15 a writer, she had a story published in *Tan Magazine*. But after  
16 magazines rejected her other fiction, she turned to writing poems  
17 and songs; and



18           WHEREAS, she took her stage surname, LaSalle, from a French  
19 character in a newspaper comic strip. Her first single, in 1967,  
20 was "A Love Reputation," a boast about man-stealing skills; and

21           WHEREAS, Chess Records released her next singles before she  
22 and her husband at the time, Bill Jones, started their own  
23 production company, Crajon, in 1969. For her next singles, Ms.  
24 LaSalle chose a Memphis Producer, Willie Mitchell, who also  
25 produced Al Green's hits. "Hung Up, Strung Out" got her signed to  
26 a Detroit label, Westbound, in 1970, and in 1971 she wrote and  
27 sang the biggest hit of her career, the million-selling No. 1 R&B  
28 single "Trapped by a Thing Called Love." It also reached No. 13  
29 on the Billboard Pop Chart, her only Top 40 crossover in the  
30 United States. She returned to the National R&B Charts in the  
31 1970s with songs including "Now Run and Tell That," "Man Sized  
32 Job," "Love Me Right" and "Married, But Not To Each Other," a song  
33 that also became a country hit for Barbara Mandrell in 1977. She  
34 met Disc Jockey James E. Wolfe, Jr., who would found the Radio  
35 Station WFKX in Jackson. They married in 1977; he survives her,  
36 along with their children: Ray Kight, Dawn Beard and Bridgette  
37 Wolfe; and

38           WHEREAS, in 1982, Ms. LaSalle eased her music slightly toward  
39 blues and signed to the Mississippi-based Malaco Label, where she  
40 recorded for most of the next three decades and wrote songs for  
41 other performers, including Z.Z. Hill. On her 1980s Malaco  
42 albums, she was often backed by the renowned Muscle Shoals Rhythm



43 Section. "My Tu-Tu," her 1985 version of the Rockin' Sidney  
44 Zydeco hit "My Toot Toot," was a hit in the United States and in  
45 Europe, reaching No. 6 on the British Top 10. Ms. LaSalle made  
46 gospel albums from 1999 to 2001, but she returned to secular music  
47 in the 2000s with albums like "Pay Before You Pump" (2007); and

48 WHEREAS, she toured steadily, largely in the Southeast, with  
49 occasional trips to Europe. In recent years, she made efforts to  
50 start a school for young musicians in Jackson. She was nominated  
51 by the Blues Foundation for a Blues Music Award in the Soul Blues  
52 Female Artist Category, alongside Mavis Staples and Bettye  
53 LaVette, and she was inducted into the Rhythm and Blues Music Hall  
54 of Fame in 2015; and

55 WHEREAS, she appeared in Marks, Mississippi, and regularly  
56 performed at the Mississippi Delta Blues and Heritage Festival,  
57 the longest-running authentic blues fest in the nation celebrating  
58 40 years in 2017, sponsored by Mississippi Action for Community  
59 Education in Greenville, Mississippi. Denise LaSalle held  
60 fundraisers, raising thousands of dollars for the Mississippi  
61 Delta tornado victims; and

62 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize the music  
63 and cultural contributions of this Mississippi legend who has  
64 served as "The R&B Queen Ambassador for the State of Mississippi":

65 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
66 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That



67 we do hereby mourn the loss and commend the career of Mississippi  
68 Blues and Soul Legend Denise LaSalle.

69 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
70 the surviving family of Ms. LaSalle, and made available to the  
71 Capitol Press Corps.

