

By: Representatives Scott,
Sykes, Perkins, Banks

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1

1 A RESOLUTION MOURNING THE LOSS AND COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND
2 STELLAR MUSIC CAREER OF THE IRREFUTABLE QUEEN OF SOUL AND RHYTHM
3 AND BLUES LEGEND MRS. ARETHA LOUISE FRANKLIN AND EXPRESSING
4 DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS UPON HER PASSING.

5 WHEREAS, it is written in Ecclesiastes 3:1, "To everything
6 there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the Heaven,"
7 and as such, the immaculate author and finisher of our soul's
8 destiny summoned the mortal presence of a dearly beloved
9 international songbird and world-renowned singer, songwriter and
10 acclaimed pianist, the irrefutable Queen of Soul and incomparable
11 rhythm and blues legend, Mrs. Aretha Louise Franklin, as she has
12 made life's final transition from earthly travailing to heavenly
13 reward, rendering great sorrow and loss to her family, friends and
14 fan base; and

15 WHEREAS, born on March 25, 1942, in Memphis, Tennessee, the
16 daughter of Mississippi Delta natives, Reverend Clarence LaVaughn
17 (C.L.) Franklin and church pianist Barbara Siggers Franklin, the
18 State of Michigan and the entirety of the world's musical and
19 entertainment industry lost a wonderful friend and icon with the



20 passing of Mrs. Franklin on Thursday, August 16, 2018, and there
21 is now a hush in our hearts as we come together to pay our
22 respects to the memory of one who has been called to join that
23 innumerable heavenly caravan as she now enjoys the eternal peace
24 described in Luke 2:29, "Lord, now you are letting your servant
25 depart in peace, according to your word"; and

26 WHEREAS, at the tender age of five, her father, renowned
27 preacher and gospel legend, Reverend C.L. Franklin moved the
28 family to Detroit upon taking on the pastoral leadership of New
29 Bethel Baptist Church, which would become the preeminent rehearsal
30 hall, second to her father's home, where young Aretha honed her
31 vocal acuity and piano proficiency; and

32 WHEREAS, by the time she was 12 years of age, Aretha began
33 traveling on the road with her father, who also began managing
34 her, during his "gospel caravan" tours for her to perform in
35 various churches, and ultimately helped Aretha sign her first
36 recording deal with J.V.B. Records, where her first album, *Songs*
37 *of Faith*, was released in 1956, but feeling the urge to cross over
38 into the secular genre of pop music after turning 18 years old,
39 Aretha convinced her father that this was the best move for her,
40 and was signed to Columbia Records in 1960 after he produced a
41 two-song demo for her that grabbed the label's attention; and

42 WHEREAS, a durable singer and songwriter whose career,
43 spanning more than six decades, delved into song, religion, love,
44 faith, cheating, pleasure and heartache, mixing romance with fun



45 grounded by her strong gospel roots, Mrs. Franklin's musical
46 maturity reflected her personal life story as chronicled by her
47 1967 recordings, "I Never Loved a Man" and "Natural Woman,"
48 providing a glimpse into her life as the mother of three children
49 and wife of seven years to her first husband; and

50 WHEREAS, leading the way as a musical linchpin uniting the
51 Civil Rights and Women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s, Aretha
52 was a long-time family friend of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who
53 believed that even one day Mississippi "will be transformed into
54 an oasis of freedom and justice," and she ascribed to his mantra
55 of nonviolence, and when the unthinkable tragedy beset Dr. King's
56 life, Aretha memorialized him with a stirring rendition of
57 "Precious Lord" during his funeral service; and

58 WHEREAS, Mrs. Franklin, whose genius and activism were
59 omnipresent in her music, famously offered to pay the bond of
60 Angela Davis, a prominent political activist who was accused of
61 conspiracy in a deadly, armed takeover of a California courtroom,
62 in 1970, employing the powerful artistry of her voice and
63 intelligence to transform racism and misogyny, likening her
64 activism to the plight of Esther in the fourth chapter and
65 sixteenth verse of the biblical book bearing her name: "Go,
66 gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast
67 ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I
68 also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto



69 the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I
70 perish"; and

71 WHEREAS, Mrs. Franklin's courage and self-confidence paved
72 the way for countless artists, and whether earthly or divine,
73 Aretha was beloved by us all because she was unapologetically
74 herself, often times singing of our deepest aspirations for
75 self-determination, dignity and love; and

76 WHEREAS, over the course of her career, Mrs. Franklin was a
77 prominent figure on the National R&B Charts with numerous
78 chart-topping hits, including: "I Never Loved A Man (The Way I
79 Love You)," "Natural Woman," "Respect," "Chain of Fools," "Ain't
80 No Way," "Think," "Bridge Over Troubled Water," "Angel," "Until
81 You Come Back to Me (That's What I'm Gonna Do)," "Rock Steady,"
82 "Day Dreaming," "Break it to Me Gently," "Freeway of Love" and "I
83 Knew You Were Waiting for Me," an international number-one duet
84 with George Michael; and

85 WHEREAS, after getting her start in Gospel, Aretha's musical
86 leanings tended more to the gritty soul of rhythm and blues, with
87 albums such as: *Spirit in the Dark*, *Young, Gifted and Black*,
88 *Amazing Grace*, self-titled album *Aretha*, *Jump to It*, *Who's Zoomin'*
89 *Who?*, *A Rose is Still a Rose* and *A Brand New Me*; and

90 WHEREAS, having toured steadily, Mrs. Franklin's repertoire
91 of performances consists of a command performance at London's
92 Royal Albert Hall before Queen Elizabeth, Super Bowl XL, the
93 inauguration of President Barack Obama, and an acclaimed guest



94 role as a waitress in the 1980 comedy musical *The Blues Brothers*,
95 Radio City Music Hall and her final appearance at Cathedral of
96 Saint John the Divine, on November 7, 2017, for the 25th
97 anniversary gala of the Elton John AIDS Foundation; and

98 WHEREAS, a natural phenomenon, Mrs. Franklin received a star
99 on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1979, had her voice declared a
100 Michigan "natural resource" in 1985, became the first woman
101 inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987, awarded the
102 Grammy Legend Award by the National Academy of Recording Arts and
103 Sciences in 1991, the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1994, a
104 Kennedy Center Honoree in 1994, recipient of the National Medal of
105 Arts in 1999, bestowed the Presidential Medal of Freedom, inducted
106 into the Michigan Rock and Roll Legends Hall of Fame and became
107 the second woman inducted into the UK Music Hall of Fame all in
108 2005, and she was the 2008 MusiCares Person of the Year; and

109 WHEREAS, after Aretha's 2015 performance at the Kennedy
110 Center Honors tribute to Carole King, President Obama was quoted
111 as having stated that "American history wells up when Aretha
112 sings. Nobody embodies more fully the connection between the
113 African-American spiritual, the blues, R&B, rock and roll—the way
114 that hardship and sorrow were transformed into something full of
115 beauty and vitality and hope"; and

116 WHEREAS, though she has traversed the river of life to now
117 stand on the celestial shores of Heaven's grandeur, to join the
118 heavenly choir of archangels, the legacy of Mrs. Franklin's memory



119 will continue to refresh the hearts and fond memories of her
120 beloved survivors: her sons, Clarence Franklin, Edward Franklin,
121 Ted White Jr. and Kecalf Cunningham; sister, Carl Kelley; several
122 grandchildren; and a host of other relatives and friends; and

123 WHEREAS, we encourage the family to find solace from the
124 overwhelming sadness created by the earthly departure of their
125 beloved family member in Revelation 21:4, wherein is recorded,
126 "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there
127 shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall
128 there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away"
129 and renewed in their faith that Mrs. Franklin fulfilled the
130 commandment of II Timothy 4:7 by having fought a good fight,
131 finishing her course and keeping the faith until the hour of her
132 departure was at hand; and

133 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives
134 that we recognize the music and cultural contributions of this
135 iconic musical legend who has served the world as "The Queen of
136 Soul":

137 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
138 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
139 mourn the loss and commemorate the life and stellar music career
140 of the irrefutable "Queen of Soul" and rhythm and blues legend
141 Aretha Louise Franklin, and extend sincere sympathies to her
142 family and friends upon her passing.



143 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
144 furnished to the surviving family of Mrs. Aretha Louise Franklin
145 and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

