

By: Representatives Straughter, Hines, Bell To: Rules
(65th), Paden, Calhoun, Holloway, Hughes

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 90

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE ATHLETICISM AND NFL
2 CAREER SUCCESS OF WALTER PAYTON AND RECOGNIZING HIM AS ONE OF THE
3 LEGENDARY FOOTBALL PLAYERS OF JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY TO BE
4 INDUCTED INTO THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE'S HALL OF FAME.

5 WHEREAS, one of three children born to Peter and Alyne Payton
6 in Columbia, Mississippi, Walter Payton, who initially declined
7 playing football at John J. Jefferson High School due in part to
8 his already packed schedule of extracurricular activities, and the
9 remainder to avoid competing with his older football playing
10 brother, Eddie, would become one of the greatest football players
11 to grace the gridiron, as a household name that would boast a
12 statistical record that dreams and legends are made of; and

13 WHEREAS, once the decision was made to play high school
14 varsity football during his junior year, Payton's success was
15 instant, even as a small running back who only stood 5-feet
16 10-inches tall, his speed, strength and agility, made him a
17 reckoning force of contention and a formidable, almost unstoppable
18 adversary on the field; and



19 WHEREAS, despite not receiving any invitations from
20 Southeastern Conference Colleges, even after establishing himself
21 as one of Mississippi's best running back prospects at the time,
22 Payton, after initially committing to Kansas State University,
23 opted instead to remain close to home and pursue his collegiate
24 career at Jackson State University, joining the Tigers' starting
25 lineup during his freshman year in the fall of 1971, followed by a
26 breakout performance on October 1, 1972, during his sophomore
27 year, when he set a then-best SWAC single-game scoring record by
28 rushing for seven touchdowns and two 2-point conversions for 46
29 points and a school record of 279 rushing yards in JSU's 72-0
30 domineering win over Lane College; and

31 WHEREAS, selected for the All-American team and named Black
32 College Player of the Year in 1973 and 1974, Payton, in his four
33 years at Jackson State University, rushed for more than 3,500
34 yards and scored more than 450 points in a pure exhibition of
35 demonstrating to fans and opponents alike, the unadulterated
36 talent and versatility he possessed as a player; and

37 WHEREAS, the first-round choice and the fourth player
38 selected in the 1975 National Football League Draft by the Chicago
39 Bears, Walter Payton, standing 5'10" and topping the scale at 200
40 pounds as a speeding locomotive, developed into a superstar of
41 unusual dimensions during his 13-season NFL tenure from 1975 to
42 1987 with the Bears, where he dominated the rushing section of the
43 league's record books during and long after his career ended; and



44 WHEREAS, at the time of his retirement in 1987, Payton's
45 statistical record included: 16,726 total yards; 10 seasons with
46 1,000 or more rushing yards, including the single game 275 total
47 yards against Minnesota in 1977; 77 games with more than 100 yards
48 rushing; 110 rushing touchdowns; 4,368 combined net attempts and
49 accounted for 21,803 combined net yards; and an impressive 750
50 points on 125 touchdowns; and

51 WHEREAS, extremely durable, Payton, who missed only one game
52 during his rookie campaign, subsequent to that one-game absence,
53 returned to play 186 consecutive games, which allowed him to
54 showcase his gifts during pre-, regular- and post-season play, and
55 enabled him to: win the National Football Conference's (NFC)
56 rushing title for five consecutive years from 1976 to 1980; lead
57 the NFC with 96 points in 1977; win the NFL kickoff return
58 championship his rookie year in 1975; be named All-Pro and All-NFC
59 seven times; make nine Pro Bowl Game appearances; be twice-named
60 NFL's Most Valuable Player and twice-named Offensive Player of the
61 Year in 1977 and 1985; be named NFC Most Valuable Player in 1977;
62 and

63 WHEREAS, eager to improve his performance from year to year,
64 Payton's efforts annually propelled the Bears into playoff
65 contention, which resulted in his ability to experience the
66 pinnacle apex of his storied career with national championship
67 status when the Chicago Bears triumphed over the New England
68 Patriots in the Super Bowl XX in January 1986; and



69 WHEREAS, subsequent to his retirement in 1987, Walter Payton
70 explored various business opportunities in several fields, from
71 real estate, to restaurants, to race cars, but most important to
72 his heart were his philanthropic and humanitarian endeavors to
73 make life better for others, primarily through his efforts with
74 the Walter Payton Foundation; and

75 WHEREAS, the creator of the signature "shutter-step"
76 maneuver, a high-stepping irregularly paced run developed to
77 distract his pursuers during long runs, Payton, who adopted the
78 motto - "Never Die Easy," fit the bill of his life as a versatile
79 athlete who earned numerous accolades for his primary running back
80 positions, and also for his exploits as a blocker, receiver,
81 emergency punter and quarterback, and were easy character traits
82 that fervently supported the decision for his enshrinement into
83 the 1993 Pro Football Hall of Fame, the 1993 Class of the
84 Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame, the 1996 College Football Hall of
85 Fame, the Jackson State University Sports Hall of Fame, and the
86 Black College Football Hall of Fame in 2010; and

87 WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to recognize
88 and pay homage to the stellar athletic feats of sports' legends of
89 Walter Payton's caliber, who are few and far between, and whose
90 natural disposition was that of a gentle giant, executing
91 dominance on the gridiron while being perfectly balanced with a
92 gentle humility and generous heart of benevolence:



93 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
94 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING
95 THEREIN, That we do hereby commend the athleticism and NFL career
96 success of Walter Payton and recognize him as one of the legendary
97 football players of Jackson State University to be inducted into
98 the National Football League's Hall of Fame.

99 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
100 furnished to the family of Walter Payton and to the members of the
101 Capitol Press Corps.

