

By: Representatives Straughter, Bell (65th)

To: Rules

## HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 70

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CELEBRATING THE  
2 OUTSTANDING COLLEGE AND NFL ATHLETIC CAREER OF WALTER PAYTON AND  
3 RECOGNIZING HIM AS ONE OF JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY'S LEGENDARY  
4 FOOTBALL PLAYERS WHO HAVE BEEN INDUCTED INTO THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL  
5 LEAGUE'S HALL OF FAME.

6 WHEREAS, Walter Payton is one of the greatest football  
7 players to grace the gridiron, who is still remembered by the  
8 State of Mississippi and the world as an iconic football figure  
9 with a statistical record that dreams and legends are made of; and

10 WHEREAS, born as one of three children to Peter and Alyne  
11 Payton in Columbia, Mississippi, a young Walter initially declined  
12 playing football at John J. Jefferson High School because of his  
13 already busy school schedule of extracurricular activities, and,  
14 in part, to avoid competing with his older established football  
15 playing brother, Eddie; and

16 WHEREAS, once the decision was made to play high school  
17 varsity football during his junior year, Payton's success was  
18 instant, even as a small running back who only stood 5-feet



19 10-inches tall, his speed, strength and agility, made him a  
20 reckoning force of contention and a formidable, almost unstoppable  
21 adversary on the field; and

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

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

40 WHEREAS, the first-round choice and the fourth player  
41 selected in the 1975 National Football League Draft by the Chicago  
42 Bears, Walter Payton, standing 5'10" and topping the scale at 200  
43 pounds as a speeding locomotive, developed into a superstar of



44 unusual dimensions during his 13-season NFL tenure from 1975 to  
45 1987 with the Bears, where he dominated the rushing section of the  
46 league's record books during and long after his career ended; and

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

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

66 WHEREAS, eager to improve his performance from year-to-year,  
67 Payton's efforts annually propelled the Bears into playoff  
68 contention, which resulted in his ability to experience the



69 pinnacle apex of his storied career with national championship  
70 status when the Chicago Bears triumphed over the New England  
71 Patriots in the Super Bowl XX in January 1986; and

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

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

90 WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to recognize  
91 and pay homage to the stellar athletic feats of sports' legends of  
92 Walter Payton's caliber, who are few and far between, and whose  
93 natural disposition was that of a gentle giant, executing



94 dominance on the gridiron while being perfectly balanced with a  
95 gentle humility and generous heart of benevolence:

96       NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
97 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING  
98 THEREIN, That we do hereby commend and celebrate the outstanding  
99 college and NFL athletic career of Walter Payton and recognizing  
100 him as one of Jackson State University's Legendary football  
101 players who have been inducted into the National Football League's  
102 Hall of Fame.

103       BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
104 furnished to the family of Walter Payton and to the members of the  
105 Capitol Press Corps.

