

By: Senator(s) Jackson (11th), Jackson (32nd), Barnett, Jordan, DeLano, Carter, Tate, McDaniel, Simmons (12th), Norwood, Caughman, Blackmon, Wiggins, Moran, Thomas, Butler, Williams, Blount, Hopson, McMahan, Michel, Harkins, Kirby, Turner-Ford, Seymour, Suber, England, Hill, Younger, Blackwell, Sojourner, Branning, McLendon, Boyd, Simmons (13th), Sparks, Witherspoon, Thompson, Frazier, Chassaniol, Barrett, DeBar, McCaughn, Chism, Horhn, Whaley

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 516

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY AND
2 CAREER OF PIONEERING COUNTRY MUSIC SUPERSTAR CHARLEY PRIDE FROM
3 SLEDGE, MISSISSIPPI, AND EXTENDING DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS
4 BEREAVED FAMILY.

5 WHEREAS, we join country music fans around the world in
6 mourning the passing of pioneering country music legend Charley
7 Pride from Sledge, Mississippi, who passed away on December 12,
8 2020, at age 86. Charley Pride was celebrated as country music's
9 first African American superstar; and

10 WHEREAS, Charley Pride was the country music genre's first
11 African American star, with 30 No. 1 songs on the country charts
12 during a legendary career; and

13 WHEREAS, he was a great athlete growing up, a star pitcher
14 and two-time All-Star for Memphis in the Negro Leagues. Injuries
15 ended his baseball dreams and he turned to a career in country
16 music. The baritone went to Nashville, and after a while he was
17 signed to Radio Corporation of America (RCA) and first hit the
18 charts in 1966 with "Just Between Me and You." Pride would become



19 a top-selling star whose hits include the enduring 1971 song "Kiss
20 an Angel Good Morning"; and

21 WHEREAS, he won three Grammys and was inducted into the
22 Country Music Hall of Fame in 2000. Pride had just received a
23 lifetime achievement award November 11, 2020, on live television
24 at the Country Music Association Awards and performed on that
25 show. He also took home the Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement
26 Award and sang "Kiss An Angel Good Mornin" with Jimmie Allen. It
27 was his final performance. The CMAs are the most revered of the
28 Nashville industry awards shows and in 1971, Pride won Entertainer
29 of the Year, the show's highest honor; and

30 WHEREAS, "I'm so heartbroken that one of my dearest and
31 oldest friends, Charley Pride, has passed away," said Dolly
32 Parton. "Charley, we will always love you." Reba McEntire said
33 "Charley Pride will always be a legend in Country music. He will
34 truly be missed but will always be remembered for his great music,
35 wonderful personality and his big heart." Billy Ray Cyrus called
36 him a "gentleman...legend and true trail blazer"; and

37 WHEREAS, Pride was born a sharecropper's son in Sledge,
38 Mississippi, joined the Army, worked at a smelting plant and tried
39 to break into big league baseball, ending up as a pitcher for a
40 New York Yankees' farm team before an injury sidelined his diamond
41 dreams. Ken Burns' Public Broadcasting Service Documentary Series
42 "Country Music" quoted Pride as saying he was inspired by baseball
43 great Jackie Robinson's major league breakthrough. Charley Pride



44 was a trailblazer whose remarkable voice and generous spirit broke
45 down barriers in country music just as his hero Jackie Robinson
46 had in baseball; and

47 WHEREAS, Pride moved to Nashville in 1963 to make music.
48 From then until 1987, he performed on 52 Top 10 hits. He was
49 RCA's top-selling country artist. He was inducted into the
50 Country Music Hall of Fame in 2000. In his memoir, Pride wrote,
51 "We're not color blind yet, but we've advanced a few paces along
52 the path and I like to think I've contributed something to that
53 process"; and

54 WHEREAS, he is survived by his wife, Rozene, three children,
55 five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren;

56 WHEREAS, we pay tribute and cherish fondly the memory of this
57 most talented and public-spirited country music legend who brought
58 honor to his home-state and will be greatly missed by all who were
59 fortunate enough to have known his wisdom and talent:

60 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
61 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
62 we do hereby pay tribute to the memory and career of pioneering
63 country music superstar Charley Pride from Sledge, Mississippi,
64 and extend deepest sympathy to his bereaved family.

65 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be transmitted
66 to the surviving family of Charley Pride, forwarded to the Country
67 Music Hall of Fame Museum, and made available to the Capitol Press
68 Corps.

