

By: Representative Banks

To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 23

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION FORMALLY REQUESTING THE JOINT
2 COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS TO APPROVE THE REPLACEMENT OF
3 THE STATUE OF JEFFERSON DAVIS THAT IS DISPLAYED IN STATUARY HALL
4 IN THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL WITH A STATUE OF EITHER B.B. KING OR
5 ELVIS PRESLEY.

6 WHEREAS, the National Statuary Hall Collection in the United
7 States Capitol is comprised of 100 statues contributed by each of
8 the 50 states to honor persons notable in each state's history;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, the State of Mississippi has representational
11 statues of Jefferson Davis and James Zachariah George displayed,
12 which were crafted by Augustus Lukeman and dedicated in 1931; and

13 WHEREAS, Jefferson Davis, who authored *Rise and Fall of the*
14 *Confederate States*, served in the United States House of
15 Representatives and the United States Senate, was President of the
16 Confederate States and eventually made his home at Beauvoir, near
17 Biloxi, Mississippi; and

18 WHEREAS, Jefferson Davis is an important figure who reflects
19 times of the past, but does not necessarily reflect the unified



20 and progressive spirit encompassing the Mississippi of today, as
21 it is Mississippi's sentimental desire to respect and celebrate
22 the past while honoring its evolution from past icons to present
23 icons; and

24 WHEREAS, Mississippi is known the world over as the
25 "Birthplace of America's Music", as it is credited for producing
26 the "King of the Blues", B.B. King, and the "King of Rock and
27 Roll", Elvis Presley, among many others, and these trailblazers
28 certainly represent the rich culture and heritage of the Magnolia
29 State, and because of this, it is most fitting for a statue of
30 either B.B. King or Elvis Presley to represent the State of
31 Mississippi in the National Statuary Hall Collection in the United
32 States Capitol; and

33 WHEREAS, the remarkable life of B.B. King began in Berclair,
34 Mississippi, where he was born Riley B. King on September 16,
35 1925, to sharecroppers, Mr. Albert and Mrs. Nora Ella King, who
36 lived in a simple home along Bear Creek, and when he was four
37 years of age, he relocated to Kilmichael, Mississippi, and then
38 Lexington, Mississippi, before moving as a teen to Indianola,
39 Mississippi; and

40 WHEREAS, "Ambassador of the Blues" and "King of the Blues"
41 are titles B.B. King earned as the result of decades of touring
42 around the world, but the life of B.B. King, who is one of the
43 most influential musicians in the history of the blues, could not
44 have begun more humbly, as his first mentor on the guitar was



45 Reverend Archie Fair, who played while preaching at a local church
46 and he also credited his teacher at the one-room Elkhorn School,
47 Luther Henson, with instilling in him dignity, independence and
48 hope, qualities that served him well during his long career; and

49 WHEREAS, while in Indianola, B.B. King worked as a tractor
50 driver, got married, performed with a gospel quartet, and began
51 actively playing the blues, and his guitar playing has served as a
52 model for countless blues, rock, and rhythm and blues musicians;
53 and

54 WHEREAS, B.B. King's 1970 crossover hit, "The Thrill Is
55 Gone", which provided him with the first of over a dozen Grammy
56 awards, was the launching point for international stardom, and
57 among his many subsequent recordings were collaborations with
58 artists across the musical spectrum including Willie Nelson, U2,
59 Eric Clapton, Luciano Pavarotti and Heavy D; and

60 WHEREAS, throughout his life, B.B. King always remembered the
61 residents back home, and in the 1960s he began making regular
62 visits to Mississippi for various events, such as an annual
63 celebration in honor of civil rights leader, Medgar Evers, and
64 workshops with students at Mississippi Valley State University in
65 Itta Bena, Mississippi, where the B.B. King Recording Studio was
66 established in 2004, and in 2008, Mississippi honored him with the
67 opening of the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center in
68 Indianola; and



69 WHEREAS, after a long and storied career that took him around
70 the world, B.B. King passed away on May 14, 2015, and he is buried
71 on the grounds of the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive
72 Center in Indianola; and

73 WHEREAS, in addition to the illustrious B.B. King,
74 Mississippi is also home to one of the most significant cultural
75 icons of the 20th century, Elvis Presley, who was born on January
76 8, 1935, to Mr. Vernon and Mrs. Gladys Presley, in a two-room
77 house in Tupelo, Mississippi, which was built by his father,
78 grandfather and uncle; and

79 WHEREAS, Elvis' signature sound began to form on his eleventh
80 birthday in 1946, when he received his first guitar from his
81 mother, which was purchased at Tupelo Hardware, and he also loved
82 gospel music and sang in a Pentecostal church choir, where he
83 developed his singing talents, and two years later, when Elvis was
84 thirteen, the Presleys moved to Memphis, Tennessee; and

85 WHEREAS, Elvis' career began in 1953, when he wandered into a
86 popular recording studio in Memphis to record two songs for his
87 mother as a birthday present, and he returned to the studio in
88 January 1954, but the owner, Sam Phillips, still was not impressed
89 with his singing, but finally, in July 1954, Mr. Phillips
90 recognized Elvis' potential; and

91 WHEREAS, in 1956, Elvis met Colonel Tom Parker, who became
92 his manager and helped him get his first hit, "Heartbreak Hotel,"
93 and following this major hit were songs like "Hound Dog," "All



94 Shook Up," "Don't Be Cruel," and "Burning Love," which were all
95 hits in the same year, and he then starred in his first motion
96 picture, "Love Me Tender"; and

97 WHEREAS, at the height of his popularity, Elvis was drafted
98 by the United States Army and served for two years, and after he
99 was discharged, he released "Are You Lonesome Tonight," which
100 stayed at the top of the charts for four weeks; and

101 WHEREAS, Elvis was given such nicknames as "The Father of
102 Rock-n-Roll," "The King of Rock and Roll," "Elvis, the Pelvis",
103 and in rural areas he was known as the "Hillbilly Cat"; and

104 WHEREAS, in 1956, Elvis returned to Tupelo for his
105 "Homecoming" concerts, and while there, he provided the funds for
106 the city to purchase the house where he was born and fifteen acres
107 to build a park for the children of East Tupelo, and when Elvis
108 returned again in 1957, he donated approximately \$14,000.00 for a
109 youth recreation center to be built in Tupelo, which had a pool,
110 playground and picnic area, and throughout his life, Elvis always
111 remembered where he was from and visited Tupelo more often than
112 local residents realized; and

113 WHEREAS, currently, the Elvis Presley Birthplace site
114 includes the birthplace home of Elvis Presley, a museum, the Elvis
115 Presley Memorial Chapel and the Assembly of God Church building
116 where the Presley family worshipped, and there is also a large
117 amount of land surrounding the complex which features the



118 "Reflections" lake, Overlook Pavilion and several statues of
119 Elvis; and

120 WHEREAS, despite Elvis' untimely death on August 16, 1977, he
121 continues to inspire new generations of musical giants, and his
122 legacy lives on as proof that even the most humble beginnings can
123 nurture talent that transcends any social or economic limitation,
124 as he helped develop rock 'n' roll from rockabilly in the United
125 States, all while embracing elements of soul, blues, country and
126 funk, and being a symbol of progress as he began to help bridge
127 the gap between different cultures in America; and

128 WHEREAS, Mississippi's musical heritage has positioned the
129 state as a true renaissance of musical genres, scaling past,
130 present and even future trends, and it has not only transformed
131 the course of America's music, it revolutionized it, and as B.B.
132 King and Elvis Presley are extraordinary Mississippi icons, their
133 legacies of musical excellence and giving back to their
134 communities will continue to encourage Mississippians and those
135 around the nation for generations to come; and

136 WHEREAS, 2 USC Section 2132 allows a state to request the
137 Joint Committee on the Library of Congress to approve the removal
138 of a previously placed statue from the collection and the
139 replacement of it with an equally suitable and socially inclusive
140 display that is representative of the entirety of the state's
141 diverse citizenry; and



142 WHEREAS, if the Joint Committee on the Library of Congress
143 approves a request, the architect of the Capitol shall enter into
144 an agreement with the state to carry out the replacement in
145 accordance with the request and any conditions that the Joint
146 Committee may require for its approval, and such agreement shall
147 provide that the new statue shall be subject to the same
148 conditions and restrictions as applied to any statue provided by a
149 state under 2 USC Section 2131 and the state shall pay any costs
150 related to the replacement, including costs in connection with the
151 design, construction, transportation and placement of the new
152 statue, the removal and transportation of the statue being
153 replaced and any unveiling ceremony; and

154 WHEREAS, several states have chosen to replace existing
155 statues, thereby including representations of Dwight Eisenhower,
156 Ronald Reagan, Gerald Ford, Thomas Edison and Helen Keller; and

157 WHEREAS, the Mississippi Legislature desires to replace the
158 statue of Jefferson Davis with a statue of either B.B. King or
159 Elvis Presley, to pay homage to such Mississippi icons, and to
160 further reflect the transformative power of Mississippi from its
161 past to its present; and

162 WHEREAS, we request the Governor of the State of Mississippi
163 to affirm the efforts of this Legislature by issuing a
164 proclamation or statement approving the request for the
165 replacement of the statue, and to create a commission of
166 Mississippi artisans and artists who are authorized to solicit and



collect private contributions for the creation and placement of the statue of either B.B. King or Elvis Presley; and

WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon this Legislature to pursue the interest of its citizens by ensuring that statues representing our state wholly reflect the astounding strides made by all citizens, particularly in this instance when the state itself bears the moniker of being the "Birthplace of America's Music," and there has been no better ambassadors of our state than the distinguished and incomparable B.B. King and Elvis Presley:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby submit this formal request to the Joint Committee on the Library of Congress to approve the replacement of the statue of Jefferson Davis with a statue of either B.B. King or Elvis Presley in the Statuary Hall of the United States Capitol.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be furnished to the Joint Committee on the Library of Congress, to the members of the Mississippi Congressional delegation and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

