

By: Representatives Blackmon, McMillan

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 52

1 A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING THE MUSICAL CAREER OF
2 JIMMY "DUCK" HOLMES.

3 WHEREAS, Jimmy "Duck" Holmes is an American blues musician
4 and proprietor of the Blue Front Cafe on the Mississippi Blues
5 Trail, the oldest surviving juke joint in Mississippi; and

6 WHEREAS, born on July 28, 1947, Holmes is known as the last
7 of the Bentonia bluesmen, as he is the last blues musician to play
8 the Bentonia School, and like Skip James and Jack Owens and other
9 blues musicians from Bentonia, Mississippi, he learned to play the
10 blues from Henry Stuckey, the originator of the Bentonia blues;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Holmes' music is based in the Bentonia tuning
13 utilizing open E-minor, open D-minor and a down tuned variant, and
14 is noted for its haunting, ethereal, rhythmic and hypnotic
15 qualities, and his eighth album, *It Is What It Is*, on Blue Front
16 Records has been praised by fans and music critics who have called
17 it "addictive" and "obsession worthy," "as gritty, stark and raw



18 as one could imagine", "absolutely hypnotic," and "an essential
19 modern recording"; and

20 WHEREAS, Jimmy Charles Holmes was born in Yazoo County,
21 Mississippi, to Carey and Mary Holmes at their home in Bentonia,
22 Mississippi, and his parents were sharecroppers, who opened the
23 Blue Front Cafe in 1948, and he took over the Blue Front Cafe when
24 his father died in 1970; and

25 WHEREAS, Henry Stuckey, the man who created the unique style
26 of blues after he returned to Bentonia after World War I, first
27 taught Holmes how to play the Bentonia School after Stuckey moved
28 next door to him and the young Holmes would hear Stuckey playing
29 on his front porch, and around 1957, Holmes picked up Stuckey's
30 guitar and started to learn; and

31 WHEREAS, Holmes' father bought him his first guitar, a yellow
32 and black plastic toy guitar for Christmas, and while Holmes would
33 occasionally play with an uncle's electric guitar when he visited
34 his uncle in New York City in the 1960s, it was not until the
35 1970s that Holmes bought his first guitar, a small acoustic guitar
36 from Radio Shack, and that original guitar is on permanent display
37 at the Delta Blues Museum in Clarksdale, Mississippi; and

38 WHEREAS, during the 1970s, Bentonia blues musicians, Jack
39 Owens, Cornelius Bright, Tommy West, Adam Slater, Dodd Stuckey
40 (Henry Stuckey's brother), and Jacob Stuckey, (Henry Stuckey's
41 cousin), came to the Blue Front Cafe to play, and Slater, Bright
42 and West initially started to teach Holmes how to play, but it



took the arrival of Jack Owens at the Blue Front Cafe on a regular basis in the 1980s, before Holmes fully grasped the style; and

WHEREAS, Jack Owens came to the Blue Front several times a week and Holmes sat outside with him and learned how to play such songs as "Hard Times Killing Floor Blues", "Devil Got My Woman", "Cherry Ball", and "Catfish," and at the same time, Tommy West, a Hill country blues musician, was also teaching Holmes how to play in that idiom; and

WHEREAS, Holmes eventually incorporated some of the techniques he learned from West into his own playing, including using the low E string for a droning bass line, and his music is based in the Bentonia tuning utilizing open E-minor, open D-minor and a down tuned variant, but he acknowledges that he writes neither music nor lyrics and does not read music; and

WHEREAS, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, Holmes was initially recorded by several people, including Alan Lomax and David Evans, and the earliest known released recording of Holmes was "Devil's Blues" that he recorded with Cornelius Bright for Evans, and it appeared in 1991 on a Wolf Records compilation album, *Giants of the Country Blues Guitar - Vol. 2*; and

WHEREAS, in the 1980s, Holmes began performing at the Bentonia Blues Festival that Holmes and his mother, Mary Holmes, started in 1972 as a community event that grew into one of the longest running blues festivals in the country, and he also started playing other blues festivals across Mississippi, the



68 United States, Europe and South America, including the Chicago
69 Blues Festival, Waterfront Blues Festival, Mississippi Valley
70 Blues Festival, Muddy Roots Music Festival, and Briggs Farm Blues
71 Festival, amongst others; and

72 WHEREAS, in 2003, Holmes recorded his first album over the
73 course of three days at the Pluto Plantation for Shade Tree
74 Records, and it was a blues label started by Peter Lee, although
75 the company folded before it ever released the recordings; and

76 WHEREAS, in October 2005, Jeff Konkel visited the Blue Front
77 Cafe and returned on November 17, 2005, to record Holmes, and
78 those recordings were released in 2006 as *Back to Bentonia* as
79 Holmes's debut release and the first release by Broke and Hungry
80 Records; and

81 WHEREAS, that album featured some traditional Bentonia Blues
82 songs as well as original compositions, and Holmes was awarded two
83 Living Blues Awards for *Back to Bentonia*, including Best Debut
84 Blues Album and Best Acoustic Blues Album, and Konkel was awarded
85 Producer of the Year for 2006; and

86 WHEREAS, in 2007, Broke and Hungry Records released Holmes'
87 second album entitled, *Done Got Tired of Tryin'*, and it received
88 additional critical acclaim and was named one of the top 10 Blues
89 Albums of 2007 by WXPB, World Cafe and was nominated for a Blues
90 Music Award; and

91 WHEREAS, in 2008, Fat Possum Records released *Gonna Get Old*
92 *Someday* consisting of those original tracks Holmes recorded in



2003 for Shade Tree Records, and in 2010, Broke and Hungry Records released Holmes' fourth album, *Ain't It Lonesome*; and

WHEREAS, since Holmes started his recording career, he has appeared in documentaries, television programs and radio programs, and in 2008, Holmes and the Blue Front Cafe were featured in the documentary, *M for Mississippi*, produced by Konkel and Roger Stolle; and

WHEREAS, additionally, on October 22, 2012, Holmes appeared with Terry "Harmonica" Bean at World Cafe Live on WXPB as part of the Mississippi Blues Project, and he appeared in the 2015 documentary film, *I Am the Blues*; and

WHEREAS, his 2019 recording, *Cypress Grove*, was chosen as a 'Favorite Blues Album' by AllMusic, and on November 24, 2020, The Recording Academy nominated Cypress Grove for the Grammy Award for Best Traditional Blues Album at the 63rd Annual Grammy Awards presentation on March 14, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Holmes' music is noted for its haunting, ethereal, rhythmic and hypnotic qualities, and his eighth album, *It Is What It Is*, on Blue Front Records has been praised by fans and music critics; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to recognize and commend outstanding Mississippi musicians, especially those such as Jimmy "Duck" Holmes, whose blues music has brought honor to his community and to the State of Mississippi:



118 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
119 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
120 recognize and commend the musical career of Jimmy "Duck" Holmes
121 and extend most sincere wishes for continued success in all his
122 future endeavors.
123 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
124 furnished to Jimmy "Duck" Holmes and to the members of the Capitol
125 Press Corps.

