MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2015

By: The Entire Membership To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 107

A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE INCOMPARABLE TALENT OF SONGSTRESS AND NATIVE MISSISSIPPIAN TONYA BOYD-CANNON AND CONGRATULATING HER UPON HER APPEARANCE AND COMPETITION ON SEASON 8 OF NBC'S HIT TALENT SERIES "THE VOICE."

WHEREAS, long before "The Voice," Mississippi-born, Louisiana-raised singer-songwriter and soul artist, Tonya Boyd-Cannon raised hers wherever and whenever possible, whether in church, as a minister of music; in Orleans Parish Prison, as a sheriff's deputy who directed the inmate choir; at schools, as a music teacher; or onstage, as a background vocalist for Jean "Mr. Big Stuff" Knight; and

WHEREAS, thanks to the NBC-TV talent show, the 35-year-old Boyd-Cannon has availed herself of the lifetime opportunity to showcase her artistic vocal talent before a national audience, after earning a spot on celebrity judge and Maroon 5 lead crooner, Adam Levine's team during her blind audition on February 24, 2015, with a rousing performance of Levine's colleague and rival judge, Pharrell Williams' "Happy"; and

WHEREAS, the daughter of a preacher, Mrs. Boyd-Cannon, who has been singing since she was a child, spent her early childhood years in Jackson, Mississippi, and Greenville, Mississippi, anointed in the music of the church before moving to New Orleans around the age of eight, where her music training was acquired by way of middle school and high school band directors, auditory and observation as a saxophonist, choir and female chorale member at Warren Easton High School, before receiving classical training as a vocalist while as a vocal performance arts major in college, initially at Dillard University before the life-altering catastrophe of Hurricane Katrina unleashed its fury, uprooting Boyd-Cannon from her beloved "Big Easy" and returned her to her birth home of Jackson, where she earned a scholarship to attend the historic Tougaloo College and finished her training under the mentorship and tutelage of Dr. Kathy Castilla; and

WHEREAS, gaining her professional start as a singer shortly after graduating high school as a background vocalist with legendary songbird Jean Knight, widely acclaimed for her 1970's hit single, "Mr. Big Stuff," Tonya the artist is accomplished as a pianist, organist, drummer and saxophonist, and she is credited with creating the first combined male and female inmate mass choir at Orleans Parish Prison after gaining employment at the correctional facility after returning to New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, after releasing her CD "Rise My Child" in 2006, Tonya was crowned winner of "Budweiser's: Battle for the Crown"

contest in 2010, which afforded her the opportunity to open for R&B heavyweights Anthony Hamilton, Kem and Jaheim, an achievement, that catapulted her to national prominence, to be followed up with performances in showcases and festivals around the country, including Alabama's Bayfest in 2011 and 2012; and

WHEREAS, Boyd-Cannon's fairly rare contralto voice, almost identical to that of a countertenor, pushes the envelope with amazing musical arrangements and jazzy lyrical content, rendering spectators in awe as she has networked tirelessly throughout the Crescent City's music community while teaching music and art, making appearances at the 2012 Jazz Fest as a guest of the Stooges Brass Band and again at the 2013 festival, where she performed her own "In New Orleans" with the Free Agents Brass Band, highlighting and bringing the personality of the city to life by using her sultry voice in every description; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, around the time she was laid off from her teaching job, she got up at 3:30 a.m. on a rainy Saturday morning to attend an open audition for "The Voice" at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, which was proof positive of her unwavering faith and perseverance to succeed in the music industry, as hours later, she was singing Whitney Houston's "I Have Nothing" before moving on to a second round of auditions to perform Bonnie Raitt's "Something to Talk About" and Jill Scott's "Golden," earning her a ticket to a final audition in Los Angeles, California, which coincidentally fell on her 35th birthday, and which she

commemorated with a soul-stirring rendition of Matthew Wilder's "Break My Stride"; and

WHEREAS, while back home in New Orleans, Tonya received the call that would change her life, the call informing her that she would sing for the celebrity judges during the show's televised "blind auditions," and the rest is left to the history of stardom in the making as she successfully sang her way to the winning post during the first of the "battle rounds" on March 9, 2015, against fellow teammate James McNeese in their charismatic and highly energized vocal dual to Michael Jacksons's "P.Y.T. (Pretty Young Thing)"; and

WHEREAS, advancing to the knockout rounds, one can rest assured that whatever the outcome, Tonya Boyd-Cannon's presence and talent is not one that will soon be forgotten, as she rests her faith and her dreams in a higher power and more supreme being as she continues to dream big and pray boldly while drawing strength from her husband and two children; and

WHEREAS, one who continues to strive toward the accomplishments associated with the greatness of living her dream, Mrs. Boyd-Cannon, who still volunteers with the inmate choir at Orleans Parish Prison, teaches via the Little Village Youth Ensemble at Dillard University, serves as the music director at St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church, Austerlitz Street Baptist Church and she mentors vocal students, will finally have

the stage and spotlights at the 2015 New Orleans Jazz Fest under her own name; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to acknowledge the musical mastery and accomplishments of Mississippi's native sons and daughters of Mrs. Boyd-Cannon's immense talent, and whose success brings great pride and esteem to the state and all of her citizens:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend the incomparable talent of songstress and native Mississippian Tonya Boyd-Cannon, congratulate her upon her appearance and competition on Season 8 of NBC's hit talent series "The Voice" and extend best wishes for continued success in all of her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be furnished to Mrs. Tonya Boyd-Cannon and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.