

Legislation Text

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Recognizing June as African American Music Appreciation Month to celebrate the African American musical influences that comprise an essential part of our nation's treasured cultural heritage.

WHEREAS, African American Music Appreciation Month has its roots in Philadelphia. On June 7, 1979, pioneering songwriter, record producer, and Philadelphia's own Kenny Gamble, one half of The Sound of Philadelphia, on-air radio personality and music activist Dyana Williams, and Cleveland radio DJ Ed Wright met with President Jimmy Carter to declare June "Black Music Month." In 2000, Congress made that declaration law; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, President Barack Obama recognized "African American Music Appreciation Month" and memorialized the name and celebration in his 2016 Presidential Proclamation; and

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama, in his Presidential Proclamation, wrote, "throughout our history, African American music has conveyed the hopes and hardships of a people who have struggled, persevered and overcome. Through centuries of injustice, music comforted slaves, fueled a cultural renaissance, and sustained a movement for equality. Today, from the shores of Africa and the islands of the Caribbean to the jazz clubs of New Orleans and the music halls of Detroit, African American music reflects the rich sounds of many experiences, cultures, and locales"; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has long been known for African American music. In 1901, United Methodist preacher Charles Albert Tindley wrote the lyrics to "We Shall Overcome," and Philadelphia is where Marian Anderson, famed contralto opera singer, was born and raised. Additionally, Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff's The Sound of Philadelphia, was influential on the culture of the United States, producing 175 gold and platinum albums, 80 number one hits, and a catalogue of more than 3,000 recorded songs that are still sampled by musicians today; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's own Walk of Fame along South Broad Street, also known as the Avenue of the Arts, reveals other notable African American musicians with Philly connections. Musicians and Philadelphians who contributed to the musical history of Philadelphia include: McFadden & Whitehead, Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes, Teddy Pendergrass, Girls' High's own Jill Scott, Sister Sledge, Billy Paul, Tammi Terrell, The Delfonics, Marion Williams, Boyz II Men, Patti LaBelle, Chubby Checker, The Soul Survivors, The Trammps, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Mtume, Heath Brothers, Jean Carne, Dee Dee Sharp, and McCoy Tyner; and

WHEREAS, The Roots Picnic, started by another Philadelphia group, The Roots, is held in June every year to further commemorate and celebrate African American Music Appreciation Month and the Philadelphia musicians who left their mark on the Country; and

WHEREAS, Spirituals, ragtime, blues, jazz, gospel, classical composition, and countless other categories of music have been created or enhanced by African Americans, and are etched into the history and culture of the United States; and

WHEREAS, African American Music Appreciation Month celebrates the invaluable contributions to the Arts and Culture of this Nation by African American musicians, and current Philadelphia artists continue that contribution. Artists such as: Meek Mill, Tierra Whack, Freeway, Santigold, Bri Steves, Laurin Talese, Lady Alma, Carol Riddick, Donn T, Suzann Christine, Terry Jones, Helen Bruner, and many more who carry on the legacy of great African American Philadelphian musicians; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby recognize June as African American Music Appreciation Month to celebrate the African American musical influences that comprise an essential part of our nation's treasured cultural heritage.