

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 449

Honoring the life and accomplishments of Ray Charles, recognizing his contributions to the Nation, and extending condolences to his family on his death.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 15, 2004

Mr. BURNS (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Georgia) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Honoring the life and accomplishments of Ray Charles, recognizing his contributions to the Nation, and extending condolences to his family on his death.

Whereas Ray Charles was born Ray Charles Robinson in Albany, Georgia, on September 23, 1930, the first child of Aretha and Baily Robinson;

Whereas Ray Charles and the Robinson family battled grinding poverty, the Depression, segregation, and young Ray's loss of his sight to glaucoma when he was only 6 years old, but they never gave up hoping and working for a better life;

Whereas while attending the St. Augustine School for the Deaf and Blind in St. Augustine, Florida, Ray Charles

learned to read Braille and type, and he developed his musical gifts by learning to compose and arrange music by ear;

Whereas Ray Charles began his career as a professional musician without financial resources, in an era of segregation, and he struggled in poverty for years before attaining success;

Whereas out of his struggle and sacrifice Ray Charles gave the world the classic songs, “I Got A Woman”, “Born to Lose”, “Hit the Road, Jack”, “I Can’t Stop Loving You”, “Crying Time”, “Living for the City”, “Busted”, “Hard Times”, “Ruby”, “The Right Time”, “Let the Good Times Roll”, “What’d I Say?”, and “Hallelujah, I Love Her So”;

Whereas Ray Charles demonstrated a unique ability to perform music in nearly every musical style, whether blues, jazz, gospel, country-western, or rock and roll;

Whereas Ray Charles transformed “Georgia on My Mind”, an old Stuart Gorrell and Hoagy Carmichael tune from 1930, into a song which is instantly recognized throughout the world and the official song of his native State of Georgia;

Whereas with his unique style of arrangement, Ray Charles gave new life for a new century to one of America’s best-known patriotic songs, “America the Beautiful”;

Whereas during his most productive musical years, Ray Charles provided unfailing personal and financial support to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in the struggle to end the practice of racial segregation which had divided the Nation;

Whereas Ray Charles extended his commitment to social reform beyond the United States, publicly opposing apartheid in South Africa and anti-Semitism worldwide;

Whereas Ray Charles was one of the most influential and recognized voices of American music throughout the world, whose influence spanned generations and musical genres; and

Whereas with the death of Ray Charles on June 10, 2004, in Beverly Hills, California, the Nation has lost one of its most prolific and influential musicians: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) honors the life and accomplishments of Ray
4 Charles Robinson;

5 (2) recognizes Ray Charles for his invaluable
6 contributions to the Nation, the State of Georgia,
7 and the American musical heritage; and

8 (3) extends condolences to the family of Ray
9 Charles on the death of a remarkable man.

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