

These activities show that Ray Charles enriched our lives in ways beyond his memorable songs like "Georgia On My Mind"—one of my favorites, and many recognized his efforts. In fact, in 1983 the NAACP honored him with an induction into their Hall of Fame noting his outstanding contributions to the African American community. He also participated in the historic, "We are the World" recording, which supported funding for the starving children in Africa. In 1986, Mr. Charles was doubly honored, first when he was made the Commander of Fine Arts and Letters by the French Government and second in Washington DC, when he was recognized in the prestigious Kennedy Center Honors ceremony.

Mr. Speaker, in April 1987, Ray Charles expounded upon his advocacy work, with a personal endowment of one million dollars to the Robinson Foundation for Hearing Disorders—a move that solidified his genuine philanthropic interests. In the following years these genuine interests were rewarded with honors such as: The National Medal of Arts from former President Clinton, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Black Achievement Awards committee, as well as the Helen Keller Achievement Award from the American Foundation for the Blind.

It is with bittersweet emotions that I stand in front of you today. Bitter as I mourn the loss of an American treasure, and send condolences to his family—sweet as I remember the legacy of a man who changed the lives of Americans forever.

I want to thank my esteemed colleague from the state of Georgia, Representative MAX BURNS, for his leadership in sponsoring this important piece of legislation.

Once again, I urge all of my colleagues to support passage of H. Con. Res. 449.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HEFLEY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BURNS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 449.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF BLUES MUSIC

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 13) recognizing the importance of blues music, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 13

Whereas blues music is the most influential form of music indigenous to the United States, providing the roots for contemporary music heard around the world such as rock

and roll, jazz, rhythm and blues, and country, and even influencing classical music;

Whereas the blues is a national historic treasure, which needs to be preserved and studied for the benefit of future generations;

Whereas blues music documents twentieth-century United States history, especially during the Great Depression and in the areas of race relations and pop culture;

Whereas the various forms of blues music trace the transformation of the United States from a rural, agricultural society to an urban, industrialized country;

Whereas the blues is an important facet of African-American culture in the twentieth century;

Whereas every year, people in the United States hold hundreds of blues festivals, and millions of new or reissued blues albums are released;

Whereas blues musicians from the United States, whether old or new, male or female, are recognized and revered worldwide as unique and important ambassadors of the United States and its music;

Whereas it is important to educate the young people of the United States so that they understand that the music they listen to today has its roots and traditions in the blues; and

Whereas there are many living legends of blues music in the United States who should be recognized and have their stories captured and preserved for future generations: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) recognizes the importance of blues music with respect to many cultural developments in United States history;

(2) calls on the people of the United States to take the opportunity to study, reflect on, and celebrate the importance of the blues; and

(3) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States and interested organizations to observe the importance of the blues with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and educational programs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BURNS) and the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BURNS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 13.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 13, which recognizes the importance of blues music. Blues music is one of the most influential forms of music indigenous to the United States and has inspired contemporary music heard around the world including rock and roll, jazz, rhythm and blues, and country.

Blues music documents 20th Century United States history, especially during the Great Depression and in the areas of race relations and pop culture. Various forms of blues music traced

the transformation of the United States from a rural, agricultural society to an urban, industrialized country, and the blues is an important facet of the African American culture in the 20th Century.

Accordingly, blues music is considered by many a national historic treasure, which needs to be preserved and studied for the benefit of future generations. Every year people in the United States hold hundreds of blues music festivals, and millions of new or reissued blues albums are released, and blues musicians from the United States, whether old or new, male or female, are recognized and revered worldwide as unique and important ambassadors of the United States and its music.

House Concurrent Resolution 13 is simple and straightforward. It recognizes the importance of blues music with respect to many cultural developments in United States history. It calls on the people of the United States to take the opportunity to study, reflect on, and celebrate the importance of the blues and requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States and interested organizations to observe the importance of the blues with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and educational programs.

I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 13, which the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FORD) introduced to recognize the importance of blues music.

The blues is an entirely American art form. It began with slaves as a way of communicating their experiences, their faith, their pain. The earliest form of the blues is thought to be the field holler, which gave voice to the extreme suffering and oppression in the construction camps of the South. The field holler grew into the spiritual, which became the basis for the blues.

The blues began as an oral tradition and were not written down until the early 1900s when W.C. Handy began performing and publishing songs that he had heard. Handy's "Memphis Blues" and "St. Louis Blues" are credited with spreading the popularity of the blues among African American audiences.

In the 1920s, the blues became a national craze. Recordings by Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday, leading blues singers, sold in the millions, and the influence of the blues can be seen both in jazz and in pop music today.

Although the blues is deeply rooted in the American black experience, listeners of all backgrounds can identify with the loneliness and the longing of the blues. The blues is truly universal.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FORD), the author of this resolution.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BURNS) and to all my colleagues who played a role in recognizing this important art form.

I join with all of my colleagues in expressing my condolences and appreciation for the enormous contributions over the years that Mr. Charles made to American music. As many of the Members know, and as has been touched on already this morning by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) and many others, the contribution that blues music had on Ray Charles and to American music as a whole cannot be understated.

Ray Charles was one of the first artists to combine the blues genre with gospel and country and jazz to perform and really evolve into a genre known as soul music, which has become a staple of the Memphis music scene, which the core and the heart of my congressional district in Tennessee. Ray Charles was inducted into the Blues Foundation Hall of Fame in 1982, another foundation located in Memphis.

The blues is one of America's greatest and original musical treasures. As the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) has noted, it is a music form that evolved out of African American work songs, field hollers, and spirituals and early string band sounds more than a century ago. As a matter of fact, the blues is the very foundation of so much of what came out of the 20th Century, including rhythm and blues; rock and roll; my generation's favorite, hip hop; and even neoclassical.

Blues music is the most celebrated form of indigenous American music, with hundreds of festivals held and thousands of new or reissued blues albums released each year in the United States and around the world.

Most musical historians agree that popular blues music as we know it today originated somewhere in the Mississippi River delta, a blend of African American spirituals and folk and country music that had moved west from the Appalachian mountains.

On a lonely platform in Tutwiler, Mississippi in 1903, W.C. Handy, widely regarded as the "Father of the Blues," first heard the music that he would imitate in a recording studio in Memphis that would become the first release of blues music for distribution throughout the Nation.

From these initial recordings, a new form of music would move to the forefront of American pop culture, a form of music that reflected the American experience, a story of hardship, determination, and ultimately freedom.

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Promulgated and developed by such icons as Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf,

Etta James, Koko Taylor, and the great B.B. King, blues music remains a living documentary of American history. From the migration from a rural, agricultural society to an urban industrialized nation, to the collective struggle during the Great Depression, to the improvement in race relations, to the development of pop culture, blues music reflects the experience, emotions and lessons of our history.

I want to acknowledge and thank the Blues Foundation again, which helps keep the blues alive and its heritage alive by promoting music educational initiatives, supporting new and existing artists, and recognizing achievements in blues music with the yearly W.C. Handy Awards, which this year celebrated their 25th anniversary, as well as the Keeping the Blues Alive Awards presented each year to nonperformers who have made contributions to the maintenance and expansion of the blues world.

Among the most important initiatives, the Blues Foundation, in partnership with Seattle's Experience Music Project, is the Blues in the Schools program, which helps K through 12 educators integrate the blues into practical classroom learning, something we in this Congress should support more of.

Through unique and exciting programs like Blues in the Schools, today's teachers are finding new ways to involve students and get them interested in learning. I believe that such efforts should be commended, encouraged and replicated; and I thank my colleagues again for bringing this resolution to the floor today.

The blues is as honest a musical form as it is uplifting. The blues is life, with all its ups and downs intact.

I ask my colleagues to support this resolution, so that organizations like the Blues Foundation and the Experience Music Project may receive the recognition they deserve for working not only to promote blues music but to use it as a tool to inspire and teach new generations about America's unique and vibrant history.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to stand to recognize the great original music genre, the blues, born in the Delta and having made its way up through Chicago, throughout this Nation and around the world, brought the legacies of such great giants as B.B. King and Muddy Waters, and paved the way for folks like Elvis Presley.

As a matter of fact, Elvis Presley once said, "I wouldn't be Elvis Presley if it weren't for the blues and if it weren't for gospel music."

The great contributions have been unparalleled in terms of American music. Rock and roll, even our jazz components, are based upon our music.

Grown from the pains of the South, of black slaves working on plantations in the hot sun, only a song in their mouths was what kept them going. Blues emanated from the struggles and from the hard lives of African Americans in this country. So, indeed, when we celebrate the blues, we celebrate the overcoming of the African American people, in spite of.

Once when B.B. King was asked what makes the blues, B.B. King said, "You make the blues by singing to make you happy when often times you are sad. When you have trouble in mind and you are blue, you can say I won't be blue always, because the sun is going to shine at my back door some day."

The blues, a great contribution to America. I am proud to join with my colleagues in recognizing this great musical genre.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve my time.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from California for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate along with my colleagues and recognize the importance of the blues. Some have called the blues the native musical and verse form in America, with a great blend of European and African traditions.

During the 1920s, blues became a national craze. Records by leading blues singers like Bessie Smith and later, in the 1930s, Billie Holiday, sold in the millions. The 1920s also saw the blues become a musical form more widely used by jazz instrumentalists as well as blues singers.

During the decades of the 1930s and 1940s, the blues spread northward with the great migration of many blacks from the South and entered into the repertory of big band jazz. The blues also became electrified with the introduction of the amplified guitar.

In some northern cities, like Chicago and Detroit, during the later 1940s and 1950s, Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, John Lee Hooker, Howlin' Wolf and Elmore James, among others, played what was basically Mississippi Delta blues, backed by bass, drums, piano and occasionally harmonica, and began scoring national hits with blues songs.

Each year the city of Chicago has its Blues Festival, holding the 21st festival this year, with great talent from up and down the Mississippi River to delight thousands of blues fans. I am proud to represent the district where the Blues Fest is held, where many great blues clubs are still singing the blues and be part of one of the greatest cities that is home to some of the greatest blues musicians. Otis Clay, Tyrone Davis, Cicero Blake, Lil' Shorty and Inez Davis are just a few that Chicago holds close to its heart and are the pride of our city's culture.

But Chicago would not be complete without the man known in Chicago and

by blues lovers all over the world as the Blues Man, the voice of WVON radio, Pervis Spann, who has distinguished himself as a broadcaster, exposing generations to the blues. Starting to promote the blues in the 1950s, he actually used it to move to the point where he actually owns the radio station, and not only that radio station, but other radio stations throughout America.

So I am pleased to simply be here to pay tribute to not only the blues but to the great individuals who have become business persons, who are civic and community leaders, who not only showcase talent, but also showcase life.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FORD), for his leadership in H. Con. Res. 13, recognizing the importance of blues music. The blues is America's music. The blues celebrates life, it celebrates growth, it celebrates struggles; but I think most of all it celebrates America's progress.

I urge strong, bipartisan support for this resolution.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 13, which recognizes the importance of blues music and requests a Presidential proclamation to observe the importance of the blues with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and educational programs.

Mr. Speaker, the blues is the most influential native form of music in the United States. The origins of blues music are founded in the unique fusion and harmony between African and European music. In the midst of its early stages as a folk music, the blues served as a treasure to history—documenting landmark events of our Nation's past, particularly slavery, segregation and the Great Depression. The evolving forms of blues music trace the transformation of the United States from a rural to an industrialized country, segregated to unsegregated. With unyielding contributions to the past, the blues will undoubtedly remain a staple of American music culture.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to highlight that the blues was a significant aspect of African American culture in the twentieth century. African American men and women first sang the blues to recount their struggles through song. This pastime developed into an inspiring art form. Timeless artists, such as the great Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, Bessie Smith, Ray Charles and a host of others cultivated this pervasive musical genre making the blues a classic art form. Driven by humble beginnings, the blues has created a platform for the traditional and popular music genres of jazz, country, rhythm and blues, rock and roll and classical music. Blues musicians are globally recognized and respected as they share this gift with the world.

Mr. Speaker, it is very fitting that we now acknowledge the contributions of blues with the passing of renowned musician, Ray Charles. The accomplishments of Ray Charles made a considerable impact on the Nation's

musical imprint—with his unique abilities to create and transform music that touched our souls with such original compositions of his blues-filled rendition of America the Beautiful. Also, it is equally worth noting that in 2003 America celebrated 100 years of blues influence that began with the first blues piece compiled by W.C. Handy.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the blues is celebrated throughout the country with hundreds of festivals and a myriad of new and classic album releases each year. Home to one of these many celebrations, is my Congressional district, Baltimore City, which recently hosted its own 10th annual Baltimore Blues Festival in recognition and celebration of this great musical art form.

Mr. Speaker, the blues is a musical art style that deserves historical preservation through many forms, including ceremony, festivities and educational initiatives. I believe it is essential to educate the Nation and the rest of the world, about how heavily rooted contemporary music is in the blues. The blues dovetails with America's struggle to create a society where all people enjoy equal rights. That is why we love the blues and that is why we identify with the blues.

I would like to thank my esteemed colleague from the state of Tennessee, Representative HAROLD FORD, Jr., for his leadership in sponsoring this important piece of legislation. I urge my colleagues to lend their support to its passage.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BURNS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 13, as amended. The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING EXERCISING INCREASED CAUTION FOR DRIVING IN PROXIMITY OF POTENTIALLY VISUALLY IMPAIRED INDIVIDUALS

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 56) expressing the sense of the Congress that States should require candidates for driver's licenses to demonstrate an ability to exercise greatly increased caution when driving in the proximity of a potentially visually impaired individual.

The Clerk read as follows:

Whereas many people in the United States who are blind or otherwise visually impaired have the ability to travel throughout their communities without assistance;

Whereas visually impaired individuals encounter hazards that a pedestrian with average vision could easily avoid, many of which involve crossing streets and roadways;

Whereas the white cane and guide dog should be generally recognized as aids to mobility for visually impaired individuals;

Whereas many States do not require candidates for driver's licenses to associate the use of the white cane or guide dog with potentially visually impaired individuals; and

Whereas visually impaired individuals have had their white canes and guide dogs run over by motor vehicles, have been struck by the side-view mirrors of motor vehicles, and have suffered serious personal injury and death as the result of being hit by motor vehicles: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that each State should require any candidate for a driver's license in such State to demonstrate, as a condition of obtaining a driver's license, an ability to associate the use of the white cane and guide dog with visually impaired individuals and to exercise greatly increased caution when driving in proximity to a potentially visually impaired individual.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) and the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE).

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H. Con. Res. 56 expresses the sense of Congress that States should require candidates for driver's licenses to demonstrate an ability to exercise greatly increased caution when driving in the proximity of a potentially visually impaired individual.

Hundreds of visually impaired individuals have had their white canes and guide dogs run over by motor vehicles, have been struck by the sideview mirrors of motor vehicles, and have suffered serious personal injury and death as a result of being hit by cars.

Unfortunately, many States do not require candidates for driver's licenses to associate the use of the white cane or guide dog with potentially visually impaired individuals.

With a little education by the States, and some extra attention paid by drivers, we can greatly improve the safety along our surface streets for those individuals who are visually impaired.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of H. Con. Res. 56.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 56, which expresses the sense of Congress that States should require candidates who apply for a driver's license to demonstrate an ability to exercise greatly increased caution when driving in the proximity of a potentially visually impaired individual.

More than 1 million individuals are blind in the United States. Many more