

# House Calendar No. 81

117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 301

[Report No. 117-358]

To amend title 36, United States Code, to establish the composition known as “Lift Every Voice and Sing” as the national hymn of the United States.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 13, 2021

Mr. CLYBURN (for himself, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. AGUILAR, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Ms. BASS, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. TORRES of New York, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. HORSFORD, Mr. RUSH, Ms. JACOBS of California, Ms. TLAIB, Mrs. LURIA, Ms. JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. EVANS, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. STANTON, Ms. STEVENS, Mr. LIEU, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CARSON, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas, Mr. KILMER, Mr. COHEN, Ms. ROSS, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. SOTO, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. NORTON, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. MENG, and Ms. SLOTKIN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

JUNE 7, 2022

Additional sponsors: Ms. BUSH, Ms. DEAN, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. SAN NICOLAS, and Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia

JUNE 7, 2022

Reported with an amendment, referred to the House Calendar, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on January 13, 2021]

# **A BILL**

To amend title 36, United States Code, to establish the composition known as “Lift Every Voice and Sing” as the national hymn of the United States.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 *Congress finds the following:*

5 (1) *“Lift Every Voice and Sing” is a beloved*  
6 *hymn that is currently produced and distributed by*  
7 *approximately 40 religious publishing houses through-*  
8 *out the United States.*

9 (2) *“Lift Every Voice and Sing” is regularly*  
10 *sung at various religious services and choir perform-*  
11 *ances at community and cultural events to commemo-*  
12 *rate the struggles that have accompanied our Nation’s*  
13 *“pursuit of a more perfect Union”.*

14 (3) *James Weldon Johnson wrote the poem “Lift*  
15 *Every Voice and Sing” in 1899 to celebrate the anni-*  
16 *versary of President Abraham Lincoln’s birthday,*  
17 *and his brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, set the poem*  
18 *to music.*

19 (4) *“Lift Every Voice and Sing” was first per-*  
20 *formed on February 12, 1900, by a choir of 500*  
21 *school children from the Stanton School in the John-*  
22 *sons’ hometown of Jacksonville, Florida, where James*  
23 *Weldon Johnson served as the principal.*

24 (5) *In 1905, Booker T. Washington’s recognition*  
25 *of “Lift Every Voice and Sing” helped to make it a*

1        *very popular song in Black communities throughout*  
2        *the United States.*

3                (6) *In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt named*  
4        *James Weldon Johnson to diplomatic positions in*  
5        *Venezuela and Nicaragua, and when he returned to*  
6        *the United States, he became affiliated with the*  
7        *NAACP.*

8                (7) *In the 1920s, the NAACP chose “Lift Every*  
9        *Voice and Sing” as its official song and it was*  
10        *dubbed the “Black National anthem”.*

11               (8) *In 1934, James Weldon Johnson, a graduate*  
12        *of Clark Atlanta University, became the first African-*  
13        *American professor at New York University, and later*  
14        *served in a similar capacity at Fisk University in*  
15        *Nashville, Tennessee.*

16               (9) *The lyrics of “Lift Every Voice and Sing”*  
17        *inspired the 16 foot sculpture, “The Harp” created by*  
18        *the renowned artist Augusta Savage and commis-*  
19        *sioned by the 1939 New York World’s Fair.*

20               (10) *“Lift Every Voice and Sing” is sung at*  
21        *gatherings of the Faith and Politics Institute, whose*  
22        *bipartisan programs and pilgrimages include partici-*  
23        *pation by Members of Congress, and was co-chaired*  
24        *for many years by the late Congressmen, Democrat*

1        *John Lewis and Republican Amo Houghton, both of*  
2        *whom transitioned in 2020.*

3        **SEC. 2. NATIONAL HYMN.**

4        (a) *IN GENERAL.*—Chapter 3 of title 36, United States  
5        Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

6        **“§ 306. National hymn**

7        *“The composition consisting of the words and music*  
8        *known as ‘Lift Every Voice and Sing’ is designated as the*  
9        *national hymn of the United States.”.*

10        (b) *CLERICAL AMENDMENT.*—The table of sections for  
11        chapter 3 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by  
12        adding at the end the following:

      “306. National hymn.”.

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