

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 696

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding jazz heritage
in the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 21, 2016

Mr. CLEAVER (for himself and Mr. RICHMOND) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives
regarding jazz heritage in the United States.

Whereas the seeds of jazz came from the merger of traditional West African slave folk music with the harmonic style of hymns of the church;

Whereas these songs eventually coalesced in unwritten form, into melodies;

Whereas these melodies came to be performed in urban centers, such as the famed Congo Square of New Orleans;

Whereas these performances evolved over time to contain the core elements such as heavy use of improvisation, polyrhythms, syncopation, and the swung note;

Whereas these elements combined with the unique performance aspect of southern dance bands bore our modern day understanding of jazz music;

Whereas pianist Jelly Rolle Morton composed his “Jelly Roll Blues” in 1905, to be later published in 1914, introducing the world to the New Orleans style;

Whereas jazz would continue to spread and mature, from the original early 20th century style of Dixieland, to the famed Kansas City Bebop of the 1930s;

Whereas Kansas City jazz and its distinguishable styles such as a 4/4 beat over the 2/4 beat, extended soloing, and a heavy blues influence would forever find a place in the hearts of musicians and common folk traveling west;

Whereas jazz would be further fine-tuned through the likes of Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Benny Goodman, Coleman Hawkins, John Coltrane, Billy Holiday, Max Roach, Dizzy Gillespie, Art Blakey, Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk, Art Tatum, the legendary Louis Armstrong, and countless others;

Whereas New Orleans, Louisiana, has become known throughout the world as the fertile ground from which music unique to the United States was born;

Whereas Kansas City, Missouri, through the musical genius of local artists including Charles “Yard Bird” Parker, Count Basie, Mary Lou Williams, Big Joe Turner, Bennie Moten, and the incomparable Jay McShann, became known throughout the world as the breeding ground from which this music unique to the United States has grown up: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

1 (1) recognizes that New Orleans, Louisiana,
2 should be officially proclaimed as “The Birthplace of
3 Jazz”; and

4 (2) recognizes Kansas City, Missouri, as “The
5 Home of Jazz”.

