

SENATE RESOLUTION 779—RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLACK PEOPLE TO THE MUSICAL HERITAGE OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE NEED FOR GREATER ACCESS TO MUSIC EDUCATION FOR BLACK STUDENTS AND DESIGNATING JUNE 2026 AS “BLACK MUSIC MONTH”

Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 779

Whereas spirituals, ragtime, blues, jazz, gospel, classical composition, and countless other categories of music have been created or enhanced by Black people and are etched into the history and culture of the United States;

Whereas the first Africans transported to the United States came from a variety of ethnic groups with a long history of distinct and cultivated musical traditions, brought musical instruments with them, and built new musical instruments in the United States;

Whereas spirituals were a distinct response to the conditions of slavery in the United States and expressed the longing of the enslaved for spiritual and bodily freedom, for safety from harm and evil, and for relief from the hardships of slavery;

Whereas jazz, arguably the most creative and complex music that the United States has produced, combines the musical traditions of Black people in New Orleans with the creative flexibility of blues music;

Whereas masterful trumpeters Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis achieved national and international recognition with the success of “West End Blues” by Louis Armstrong in the 1920s and “So What” by Miles Davis in the late 1950s;

Whereas Thomas Dorsey, the “Father of Gospel Music”, used his composing talents to merge sacred and secular styles that created a revolution in music;

Whereas talented jazz pianist and vocalist Nat King Cole recorded more than 150 singles and sold more than 50,000,000 records;

Whereas the talent of Ella Fitzgerald, a winner of 13 Grammy Awards, is epitomized by a rendition of “Summertime”, a bluesy record accompanied by melodic vocals;

Whereas Natalie Cole, the daughter of Nat King Cole, achieved musical success in the mid-1970s as a rhythm and blues artist with the hits “This Will Be” and “Unforgettable”;

Whereas, in the 1940s, bebop evolved through jam sessions, which included trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie and alto saxophonist Charlie Parker, held at clubs in Harlem, New York, such as Minton’s Playhouse;

Whereas earlier classical singers such as Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, one of the first widely known Black vocalists, and other early Black singing pioneers, including Nellie Mitchell Brown, Marie Selika Williams, Rachel Walker Turner, Marian Anderson, and Flora Batson Bergen, paved the way for the female Black concert singers who have achieved great popularity during the last 50 years;

Whereas the term “rhythm and blues” originated in the late 1940s as a way to describe recordings marketed to Black people and replaced the term “race music”;

Whereas lyrical themes in rhythm and blues often encapsulate the Black experience of pain, the quest for freedom, joy, triumphs and failures, relationships, economics, and aspiration and were popularized by artists

such as Ray Charles, Ruth Brown, Etta James, and Otis Redding;

Whereas the musical virtuoso Reverend Richard Smallwood, a composer and arranger of classical gospel music, continues to inspire audiences and performers worldwide;

Whereas soul music originated in the Black community in the late 1950s and early 1960s, combines elements of Black gospel music, rhythm and blues, and jazz, and was popularized by artists such as Aretha Franklin, James Brown, Ray Charles, Sam Cooke, Bill Withers, and Jackie Wilson;

Whereas Motown, founded as a record label in 1959, evolved into a distinctive style known for the “Motown Sound”, a blend of pop and soul musical stylings made popular by prominent Black artists such as Marvin Gaye, James Mason, and Mary Wells;

Whereas go-go, developed by Black musicians in the mid-1960s and combining funk, soul, and Latin music, was popularized by artists such as Chuck Brown and Rare Essence, and is the “official music of Washington, DC”;

Whereas Harry Belafonte, a singer, actor, activist, and a supporter and confidant of Martin Luther King, Jr., throughout the civil rights movement, influenced by his Caribbean roots, popularized calypso music in the United States;

Whereas, in the early 1970s, the musical style of disco emerged and was popularized by programs such as Soul Train and by artists such as Donna Summer;

Whereas reggae is a genre of music that originated in Jamaica in the late 1960s and incorporates some of the musical elements of rhythm and blues, jazz, mento, calypso, and African music, and was popularized by artists such as Bob Marley;

Whereas rock and roll was developed from Black musical styles such as gospel and rhythm and blues and was popularized by artists such as Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Little Richard, and Jimi Hendrix;

Whereas rap, arguably the most complex and influential form of hip-hop culture, combines blues, jazz, and soul and elements of the Black musical tradition with Caribbean calypso, dub, and dance hall reggae;

Whereas the development and popularity of old-style rap combined confident beats with wordplay and storytelling, highlighting the struggle of Black youth growing up in underresourced neighborhoods;

Whereas Dayton, Ohio, known as the “Land of Funk”, helped give rise to the genre of funk as a mixture of soul, jazz, and rhythm and blues and popularized bands such as the Ohio Players, Heatwave, Roger and Zapp, and Lakeside;

Whereas contemporary rhythm and blues, which originated in the late 1970s and combines elements of pop, rhythm and blues, soul, funk, hip hop, gospel, and electronic dance music, was popularized by artists such as Whitney Houston and Aaliyah;

Whereas Prince Rogers Nelson, a Minnesota native, was a one-of-a-kind artist who made “Purple Rain” a household name, First Avenue a landmark, and brought international fame to Minnesota’s music scene;

Whereas the incredible Billie Holiday created a cultural reset by recording “Strange Fruit”, originally a poem that depicted lynching in the Southern United States, which became the first protest song of the civil rights era;

Whereas the talented jazz artist Duke Ellington pushed boundaries with his hits “It Don’t Mean a Thing if It Ain’t Got That Swing” and “Sophisticated Lady” and received 13 Grammy Awards and the Presidential Gold Medal;

Whereas Sister Rosetta Tharpe, known as the “Godmother of Rock ‘n’ Roll”, combined

her distinctive guitar style with melodic blues and traditional gospel music that influenced the likes of Aretha Franklin and Chuck Berry;

Whereas Tina Turner, known as the “Queen of Rock ‘n’ Roll”, stunned audiences with her powerful vocals, was the first woman or Black musician to be featured on the cover of Rolling Stone, and received 12 Grammy Awards during her lifetime;

Whereas trailblazer Florence Price was the first noted Black female composer to gain national status and the first Black woman to have her composed work performed by a major national symphony orchestra;

Whereas the classical singer Marian Anderson broke down racial barriers by performing at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939 after being denied the opportunity to sing in front of an integrated audience at the Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall in Washington, DC;

Whereas country music singer Charley Pride was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2000 and has had more than 40 hits reach number 1 on the country charts;

Whereas Nina Simone, one of the most prominent and extraordinary soul singers, has music spanning more than 4 decades that impacted generations with detailed storytelling;

Whereas musician Bobby McFerrin brought joy to audiences everywhere with his smash hit “Don’t Worry Be Happy”;

Whereas famous saxophone player John Coltrane made his impact on genres like bebop, jazz, and rhythm and blues through his work such as “A Love Supreme”;

Whereas David Jolicoeur, also known as Trugoy the Dove, was a founding member of hip-hop groups De La Soul and Native Tongues and used his passion for rap music to spread positive messages within his community;

Whereas musical force Marvin Gaye used his versatility as an artist to produce hits like “I Heard It Through the Grapevine” and “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough”;

Whereas Sylvia Robinson, a New Jersey native, was an American singer, record producer, and founder of Sugar Hill Records and is widely credited with launching the hip-hop genre internationally;

Whereas New Jersey resident Q-Tip, also known as Kamaal Fareed, along with his fellow members of A Tribe Called Quest—Phife Dawg, Jarobi White, and Ali Shaheed Muhammad—helped define uplifting and conscious hip-hop;

Whereas East Orange, New Jersey, native Whitney Houston, one of the most recognizable voices in music, sold more than 220,000,000 records worldwide, making her one of the best-selling artists of all time, and holds the Guinness World Record as the most awarded female artist with more than 400 career awards.

Whereas Camden, New Jersey, native Leon Huff and his longtime partner Kenny Gamble are Grammy-winning songwriters and producers, who founded Philadelphia International Records and produced more than 170 gold and platinum records for artists such as Billy Paul, Lou Rawls, The O’Jays, Patti LaBelle, and Phyllis Hyman;

Whereas Black Music Month was established 47 years ago by songwriter and producer Kenny Gamble, broadcaster Dyana Williams, and radio executive Ed Wright under the auspices of the Black Music Association;

Whereas the National Museum of African American Music in Nashville, Tennessee, serves as the official home of Black Music Month and is dedicated to preserving and celebrating the central role of Black music in American culture;

Whereas a recent study by the National Arts Education Data Project found that 49 percent of all students attending schools with a predominately African-American student population do not participate in school music programs;

Whereas Black students scored the lowest of all ethnicities in the most recent National Assessment for Educational Progress arts assessment;

Whereas Black students often receive a music education that does not reflect their own culture;

Whereas students who are eligible for the school lunch program established under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) have significantly lower scores on the music portion of the National Assessment for Educational Progress arts assessment than students who are ineligible for that program, which suggests that students in low-income families are disadvantaged in the subject of music;

Whereas a study found that—

(1) nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of music ensemble students were White and middle class, and only 15 percent of those students were Black; and

(2) only 7 percent of music teacher licensure candidates were Black; and

Whereas students of color face many barriers to accessing music education and training, especially in large urban public schools: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes—

(A) the contributions of Black people to the musical heritage of the United States;

(B) the wide array of talented and popular Black musical artists, composers, songwriters, and musicians who are underrecognized for contributions to music;

(C) the achievements, talent, and hard work of Black pioneer artists and the obstacles that those artists overcame to gain recognition;

(D) the need for Black students to have greater access to, and participation in, culturally relevant music programs in schools across the United States; and

(E) Black History Month and Black Music Month as an important time—

(i) to celebrate the impact of the Black musical heritage on the musical heritage of the United States; and

(ii) to encourage greater access to music education so that the next generation may continue to greatly contribute to the musical heritage of the United States; and

(2) designates June 2026 as “Black Music Month”.

SENATE RESOLUTION 780—EX-PRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF JUNE 19, 2026, AS “WORLD SICKLE CELL AWARENESS DAY” IN ORDER TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES AND GLOBAL COMMUNITY ABOUT SICKLE CELL DISEASE AND THE CONTINUED NEED FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH, EARLY DETECTION SCREENINGS, NOVEL EFFECTIVE TREATMENTS LEADING TO A CURE, AND PREVENTATIVE CARE PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO COMPLICATIONS FROM SICKLE CELL ANEMIA AND CONDITIONS RELATING TO SICKLE CELL DISEASE

Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 780

Whereas sickle cell disease (referred to in this preamble as “SCD”) is a group of inherited red blood cell disorders, a genetic condition present at birth, and a major health problem in the United States and worldwide;

Whereas the 2026 theme of World Sickle Cell Awareness Day, “Closing the Survival Gap: Equity in Sickle Cell Disease”, is an immediate call to close the survival gap and push towards a universal cure;

Whereas, in 1972, Dr. Charles Whitten co-founded the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America to improve research, education, and health care for SCD patients and which is now headquartered in Hanover, Maryland;

Whereas, in 1972, Congress passed the National Sickle Cell Anemia Control Act (Public Law 92-294; 86 Stat. 136), which, for the first time, provided authority to establish education, information, screening, testing, counseling, research, and treatment programs for SCD;

Whereas sickle cell trait (referred to in this preamble as “SCT”) is a gene mutation that causes a single misspelling in the DNA instructions for hemoglobin, a protein that aids in carrying oxygen in the blood, and can result in chronic complications for individuals living with SCD, including anemia, stroke, infections, organ failure, tissue damage, intense periods of pain referred to as vaso-occlusive crises, and even premature death;

Whereas SCT occurs when an individual inherits 1 copy of the sickle cell gene from 1 parent, and, although most individuals who have SCT live normal lives, when both parents have SCT, there is a 25 percent chance that any of their children will have SCD;

Whereas there are an estimated 1,000,000 to 3,000,000 individuals with SCT in the United States, with many unaware of their status;

Whereas approximately 100,000 individuals have SCD in the United States, with 1 out of every 365 African-American births and 1 out of every 16,300 Hispanic-American births resulting in SCD, and nearly 1 out of 13 African-American babies are born with SCT;

Whereas SCD affects millions of individuals throughout the world, especially individuals of genetic descent from certain countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South and Central America, Saudi Arabia, India, and the Mediterranean basin;

Whereas the variance relating to the prevalence of SCT ranges greatly by region and demography, with overall rates as high as 40 percent in parts of Africa;

Whereas approximately 1,000 children in Africa are born with SCD each day, 50 to 80 percent of whom will die before their fifth birthday;

Whereas, in 2006, the World Health Assembly passed a resolution, adopted by the United Nations in 2009, recognizing SCD as a public health priority with a call to action for each country to implement measures to tackle the disease, and in 2010, the World Health Assembly passed a resolution relating to preventing and managing birth defects, including SCD;

Whereas screening newborns for SCD is a crucial first step for families to obtain a timely diagnosis, to obtain comprehensive care, and to decrease the mortality rate for children with respect to SCD;

Whereas, in 2023, hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (commonly known as “HSCT” or bone marrow transplant) was the only cure for SCD, and the Food and Drug Administration has since approved 2 gene therapies that have been demonstrated to cure SCD;

Whereas there is an immediate need for lifesaving therapeutics that can improve the duration and quality of life for individuals with SCD;

Whereas, in 2020, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine developed a comprehensive strategic plan and blueprint for action to address SCD, which highlights the need to develop new innovative therapies and to address barriers to the equitable access of approved treatments;

Whereas, in 2020, the Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with the American Society of Hematology and the SickleInAfrica Consortium, and in collaboration with the World Health Organization, hosted a webinar for a joint effort to strengthen efforts to combat SCD during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond;

Whereas the late Kwaku Ohene-Frempong, M.D., Professor Emeritus of Pediatrics at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and American Society of Hematology member who founded and served as a member of the Global Sickle Cell Disease Network, was a leader in advancing the body of knowledge in SCD research, public health, and medicine and is recognized as immeasurably benefitting thousands of children worldwide; and

Whereas, although June 19, 2026, has been designated as “World Sickle Cell Awareness Day” to increase public awareness across the United States and global community about SCD, there remains a continued need for empirical research, early detection screenings, novel effective treatments leading to a cure, and preventative care programs with respect to complications from sickle cell anemia and conditions relating to SCD: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of World Sickle Cell Awareness Day;

(2) commits to ensuring equitable access to new sickle cell disease (referred to in this resolution as “SCD”) treatments by shining the light among all economic, racial, and ethnic groups to improve health outcomes for individuals living with SCD;

(3) calls on the Department of Health and Human Services to create global policy solutions aimed at providing support for the global community with respect to SCD and, in partnership with local governments, the domestic resources needed to provide access to newborn screening programs, therapeutic interventions, and support services with respect to SCD;

(4) supports eliminating barriers to equitable access to innovative SCD therapies, including cell, gene, and gene-editing therapies in the Medicare and Medicaid systems for the most vulnerable patients;

(5) encourages the people of the United States and the world to hold appropriate programs, events, and activities on World Sickle Cell Awareness Day to raise public awareness of SCD traits, preventative-care programs, treatments, and other patient services for those suffering from SCD, complications from SCD, and conditions relating to SCD;

(6) encourages the President to form a Sickle Cell Disease Interagency Group, which should include the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Institute of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, to work toward policies that will support equitable and appropriate access to innovative SCD therapies; and

(7) with respect to the policies described in paragraph (6), urges the interagency group described in that paragraph to consider options that not only address access to potential future curative treatments for SCD, but also address the biases that the populations most affected by SCD continue to face within the United States and global healthcare systems.