

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

A CEREMONAL RESOLUTION

25-240

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

June 11, 2024

To celebrate the legacy, achievements, and contributions of African Americans to music, the role they played in American music history, and to declare June as Black Music Month.

WHEREAS, Black Music Month was founded by Dyana Williams, a former SHUR radio personality, radio DJ Ed Wright, and legendary soul producer Kenny Gamble in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania;

WHEREAS, Black Music Month was established to recognize and celebrate the profound influence of Black musical contributions in the United States and around the world, and to highlight the diverse genres and styles that Black musicians have pioneered and influenced across history;

WHEREAS, the earliest form of Black musical expression in American spirituals were based on Christian psalms and hymns and merged with African music styles and secular American music forms;

WHEREAS, spirituals were originally an oral tradition and imparted Christian values while also defining the hardships of slavery;

WHEREAS, teacher and pianist Amelia Louise Tilghman created the first African American Music journal called The Musical Messenger from 1886 to 1891;

WHEREAS, former slave and New York City street performer George W. Johnson is recognized as the first African American recording star of the phonograph record, and by most accounts the very first African-American recording artist;

WHEREAS, in 1920 singer Mamie Smith made Blues history as the first African American to make Blues recordings;

WHEREAS, President Jimmy Carter endorsed the movement on June 7, 1979, hosting the inaugural Black Music Month Celebration on the White House Lawn, and featured performances by iconic artists such as Chuck Berry and Billy Eckstine;

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WHEREAS, in 2000 the first official Presidential Proclamation recognizing Black Music Month was signed by President Bill Clinton, in 2009 President Barack Obama renamed it African-American Music Appreciation Month, and in 2021 President Joe Biden renamed it Black Music Appreciation Month;

WHEREAS, Black Music Month continues to celebrate the essential role of African American music in shaping the cultural heritage of the United States and acknowledges the contributions of Black musicians across various genres including gospel, blues, jazz, R&B, folk, rock and roll, hip-hop, and rap; and

WHEREAS, Black Music Month highlights the social impact of African American music, including its role in expressing social commentary, promoting racial integration, and addressing social and political issues.

THEREBY IT IS RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Black Music Month Recognition Resolution of 2024”.

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia honors and recognizes the exceptional contributions of African Americans to the United States and to the District of Columbia’s music and declares June as Black Music Month.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.