Chapter No. 2061
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AM / EH

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 88

Originated in House _____ Clerk

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 88

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE LOSS AND COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND STELLAR MUSIC CAREER OF MISSISSIPPI BLUES AND SOUL LEGEND DENISE LASALLE AND EXPRESSING DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS UPON HER PASSING.

WHEREAS, it is written in Ecclesiastes 3:1, "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the Heaven," and as such, the immaculate author and finisher of our soul's destiny summoned the mortal presence of dearly beloved Mississippi songbird, renowned Mississippi R&B singer, songwriter and record producer, the incomparable Mrs. Denise LaSalle, as she has made life's final transition from earthly travailing to heavenly reward, rendering great sorrow and loss to her family, friends and fan base; and

WHEREAS, born Ora Denise Allen on July 16, 1934, in the hamlet of Sidon, Leflore County, Mississippi, situated in the heart of the Mississippi Delta, the seventh of eight children to Mr. Nathaniel Allen, Sr., and Mrs. Nancy Cooper Allen; the State of Mississippi lost a wonderful friend and icon with the passing

of Mrs. LaSalle, hailed by her fans as the "Queen of the Blues," on January 8, 2018, and there is now a hush in our hearts as we come together to pay our respects to the memory of one who has been called to join that innumerable heavenly caravan as she now enjoys the eternal peace described in Luke 2:29, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word"; and

WHEREAS, at the tender age of seven, her family moved to Belzoni, Mississippi, where LaSalle attended Belzoni Colored School, which later became McNair School, and sang in the church while also honing her vocal acuity by listening to country music and blues on the radio before joining the "Great Migration" of African Americans from the South to northern parts of the country; and

WHEREAS, as a young teenage bride, she moved to Chicago to escape the harshness that the reality of life presented in Mississippi where she decided to pursue her talent in the music industry, first singing with a gospel group, the Sacred Five and while working as a barmaid in 1963, Denise met her music mentor, Billy "The Kid" Emerson, who would serve as producer for "Love Reputation" on Tarpon Records in 1966 and reissued on Chess Records in 1967; and

WHEREAS, a durable Blues and soul singer and songwriter who in a half-century-long career delved into song, love, cheating, pleasure and heartache, mixing romance with fun, LaSalle had

initial hopes of becoming a writer, and even had a story published in *Tan Magazine*, but after magazines rejected her other fiction, she turned to writing poems and songs, and the rest is a masterful song artist's history; and

WHEREAS, taking her stage surname, LaSalle, from a French character in a newspaper comic strip, Denise released several singles on Chess Records before starting her own production company, Crajon and its subsidiary labels Parka Records and Gold Star Records in 1969, with her then husband Bill Jones, where the couple recorded The Sequins, Bill Coday and LaSalle herself; and

WHEREAS, for her next singles, Mrs. LaSalle chose Memphis producer, Willie "Papa Willie" Mitchell, who had also produced Al Green's hits, to work his magic on "Hung Up, Strung Out" in Memphis' Royal Recording Studios, which enabled her to sign with Detroit label, Westbound Records, in 1970, a deal that proved rewarding with the 1971 release of the biggest hit of her career, the million-selling No. 1 R&B single "Trapped by a Thing Called Love," which also reached No. 13 on the Billboard Pop Chart, and became her only Top 40 crossover in the United States; and

WHEREAS, over the next 14 years, LaSalle was a prominent figure on the National R&B Charts with 16 hits, including, "Now Run and Tell That," "Man Sized Job," "Love Me Right," "Don't Mess With My Tu-Tu" and "Married, But Not To Each Other," a song that also became a country hit for Barbara Mandrell in 1977; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Denise's musical leanings tendered slightly toward the Blues, when she penned "Down Home Blues" for Z.Z. Hill and subsequently signed to Mississippi-based Malaco Label, where she recorded 10 albums, which consisted of several hits like "Lady in the Streets," "Down Home Blues," "Don't Mess With My Man" and "24 Hour Woman"; and

WHEREAS, after recognizing a lack of Blues music being played on the radio, Mrs. LaSalle championed the project for the preservation of the Blues genre by organizing the National Association for Preservation of the Blues (NAPOB) and founding the Blues Academy, which served as a forum to educate younger generations about the Blues at no cost; and

WHEREAS, having toured steadily, largely in the Southeast, with occasional trips to Europe, Mrs. LaSalle, who briefly made gospel albums from 1999 to 2001 before returning to secular music with albums like "Pay Before You Pump," was nominated by the Blues Foundation for a Blues Music Award in the Soul Blues Female Artist Category, alongside Mavis Staples and Bettye LaVette, and she was inducted into the Rhythm and Blues Music Hall of Fame in 2015; and

WHEREAS, making regular appearances to perform at the Mississippi Delta Blues and Heritage Festival, the longest-running authentic blues fest in the nation, sponsored by Mississippi Action for Community Education in Greenville, Mississippi, Denise's benevolence was unparalleled as she held fundraisers,

raising thousands of dollars for the Mississippi Delta tornado victims; and

WHEREAS, though she has traversed the river of life to now stand on the celestial shores of Heaven's grandeur, to join the heavenly choir of archangels, the legacy of Mrs. LaSalle's memory will continue to refresh the hearts and fond memories of her beloved survivors: husband of 41 years, James E. Wolfe, Jr.; children, Bridgette Edwards, Lynn Hayden, Kenneth Ray Kight, Jr., and Dawn Jones; sister, Naomi Pruitt; nine grandchildren, Samantha, Monet, Jamie-Lynn, Kealyn, Kenneth Ray III, Ray'Ven, Myles, Kinsleigh, Cedarius and Cyra; six godchildren and a host of other relatives and friends; and

WHEREAS, we encourage the family to find solace from the overwhelming sadness created by the earthly departure of their beloved family member in Revelation 21:4, wherein is recorded, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" and renewed in their faith that Mrs. LaSalle fulfilled the commandment of II Timothy 4:7 by having fought a good fight, finishing her course and keeping the faith until the hour of her departure was at hand; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature that we recognize the music and cultural contributions of this Mississippi

legend who has served as "The R&B Queen Ambassador for the State of Mississippi":

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby mourn the loss and commemorate the life and stellar career of Mississippi Blues and Soul Legend Denise LaSalle, and extend sincere sympathies to her family and friends upon her passing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be furnished to the surviving family of Mrs. Denise LaSalle and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
March 22, 2018

Philip Gunn

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
March 24, 2018

Tate Reeves

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE