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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 511

Offered January 13, 2021

Prefiled October 8, 2020

Designating September, in 2021 and in each succeeding year, as Gospel Music Heritage Month in Virginia.

 Patron—Ward

 Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, gospel music is a unique American musical art form, characterized by uplifting vocal harmonies and Christian themes in its lyrics; and

WHEREAS, gospel music is one of the cornerstones of the musical and cultural landscape of the United States and has grown beyond its roots to achieve pop culture and historical relevance around the world; and

WHEREAS, gospel music traces its roots to multiple influences and foundations, from African American spirituals that blended diverse elements of traditional African music to melodic influences from Irish folk songs and hymns; and

WHEREAS, some of the most memorable voices in the history of gospel music include Thomas Dorsey, Mahalia Jackson, James Vaughan, Roberta Martin, Virgil Stamps, Dinah Washington, the Stamps Quartet, The Highway Q.C.'s, The Statesmen Quartet, The Soul Stirrers, Point of Grace, Smokie Norful, James Cleveland, Joe Ligon and The Mighty Clouds of Joy, Kirk Franklin, V. Michael McKay, Theola Booker, Yolanda Adams, Edwin and Walter Hawkins, Sandi Patty, the Winans, Kathy Taylor, The Staple Singers, and BC&S; and

WHEREAS, Virginia has been home to many prominent gospel singers, including the Paschall Brothers, Maggie Ingram, and Charlie McClendon, and many church congregations throughout the Commonwealth share the joy of song with their communities through gospel choirs; and

WHEREAS, gospel music ultimately borrowed from other uniquely American musical styles like ragtime, jazz, and blues, and the influence of gospel music can be found in all forms of secular music, including rock and roll, country, soul, rhythm and blues, and countless other styles; and

WHEREAS, many of the biggest names in music have taken inspiration from the gospel music tradition or have recorded gospel music, including Sam Cooke, Al Green, Elvis Presley, Marvin Gaye, Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, Little Richard, Ray Charles, Buddy Holly, Alan Jackson, Dolly Parton, Mariah Carey, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, and Randy Travis; and

WHEREAS, gospel music has provided a musical backdrop for many forms of mainstream media, from hit television series to major motion pictures, including *American Idol*, *Dancing with the Stars*, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, *Sister Act*, *The Preacher's Wife*, *Evan Almighty*, and more; and

WHEREAS, gospel music has a huge audience around the United States and the world, a testament to the universal appeal of a historical American art form that both inspires and entertains peoples of all ages across racial, ethnic, religious, and geographic boundaries; and

WHEREAS, the Gospel Music Heritage Month Foundation was established to celebrate gospel music's contributions to the American musical tradition and educate people throughout the United States on the genre's rich history; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate September, in 2021 and in each succeeding year, as Gospel Music Heritage Month in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to Gospel Music Heritage Month Foundation so that members of the organization may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this month on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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