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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 626

Offered January 25, 2021

Designating January 11, in 2022 and in each succeeding year, as Clarence Clemons Day in Virginia.

Patron—Jones

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Clarence A. Clemons, Jr., commonly known to his friends and fans as "the Big Man," was born on January 11, 1942, in Norfolk County, Virginia, and moved to New Jersey in the early 1960s, where he worked as a counselor at the New Jersey Training School for Boys at Jamesburg; and

WHEREAS, Clarence Clemons was an accomplished tenor saxophone player and baritone vocalist who was influenced by the soul and spirituality of jazz and Gospel music in his youth and later developed a power and presence firmly grounded in the rock and roll tradition; and

WHEREAS, while a front man in his own right, Clarence Clemons was best known as a member of Bruce Springsteen's "heart-stopping, pants-dropping, hard-rocking, booty-shaking, love-making, earth-quaking, Viagra-taking, justifying, death-defying, legendary E Street Band"; and

WHEREAS, Clarence Clemons met Bruce Springsteen in 1971 in Asbury Park, New Jersey, and they performed in thousands of concerts together from the 1970s to 2009; their meeting was immortalized in the song "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out" in which Springsteen sings, "the change was made uptown and the Big Man joined the band"; and

WHEREAS, Clarence Clemons' saxophone was essential to the success of the E Street Band, and his unique sound is an irreplaceable part of classics like "Sherry Darling," "Thundercrack," "Jungleland," "Badlands," and "Born to Run"; and

WHEREAS, the close friendship between Bruce Springsteen and Clarence Clemons was evident by their appearance together on the cover of the iconic album *Born to Run*, which shows "the Boss" leaning against the Big Man as he plays his saxophone; and

WHEREAS, Clarence Clemons broke down racial barriers as an African American musician in a genre dominated by white musicians, and he was an inspirational figure to people of many races and backgrounds all around the world; and

WHEREAS, with his technical brilliance, theatrical talent, and irrepressible joy for music, Clarence Clemons was an elemental force who could quiet a stadium as easily as he could bring it to life; his saxophone solos during the E Street Band's legendary live concerts were highly anticipated, and he was always named last in the band introductions, to the delight of the concertgoers who greeted his every move with roars of approval; and

WHEREAS, when not working with the E Street Band, Clarence Clemons was a successful film and television actor, the author of an autobiography, and a performer who worked or appeared with an eclectic group of musicians including Ringo Starr, Aretha Franklin, Jackson Browne, and most recently Lady Gaga; and

WHEREAS, Clarence Clemons would often appear at charitable benefits and concerts in support of many worthy causes; and

WHEREAS, Clarence Clemons suffered from numerous medical ailments, yet toured with the E Street Band as recently as 2009 and was participating in an intense regimen of rehabilitation in order to join the band for a tour in 2012 when he passed away from complications of a stroke on June 18, 2011; and

WHEREAS, the Big Man may be gone, but at the edge of a long, dark night—if you listen—he can still lead you home; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate January 11, in 2022 and in each succeeding year, as Clarence Clemons Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the family of Clarence A. Clemons, Jr., so that they 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 day on the General Assembly's website.