



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 0251X-2018, **Version:** 1

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To honor, recognize and celebrate the life of Aretha Louise Franklin and to extend our sincerest condolences to her family and friends on the occasion of her passing, Thursday, August 16, 2018.

**WHEREAS**, Aretha Franklin was born on March 25, 1942 in Memphis, Tennessee to Barbara and Clarence Franklin - she grew up in Detroit, Michigan; and

**WHEREAS**, Ms. Franklin started teaching herself to play the piano - there were two in the house - before she was 10, picking up songs from the radio and from Ms. Clara Ward's gospel records. Around the same time, she stood on a chair and sang her first solos in church; and

**WHEREAS**, At 12, Ms. Franklin joined her father on tour, sharing concert bills with Ms. Clara Ward and other leading gospel performers. Recordings of a 14-year-old Ms. Franklin performing in churches - playing piano and belting gospel standards to ecstatic congregations - were released in 1956. Her voice was already spectacular.

**WHEREAS**, As a young gospel singer Ms. Franklin spent summers on the circuit in Chicago, staying with Mavis Staples' family, After turning 18, Aretha confided to her father that she aspired to follow Sam Cooke in recording pop music; and

**WHEREAS**, Ms. Franklin decided to build a career in secular music. Leaving her children with family in Detroit, she moved to New York City. John Hammond, the Columbia Records executive who had championed Billie Holiday, signed the 18-year-old Ms. Franklin in 1960, for her first studio album, "Aretha," which sent two singles to the R&B Top 10: "Today I Sing the Blues" and "Won't Be Long." The annual critics' poll in the jazz magazine DownBeat named her the new female vocal star of the year.

**WHEREAS**, When Ms. Franklin sang "Respect," the Otis Redding song that became her signature, it was never just about how a woman wanted to be greeted by a spouse coming home from work. It was a demand for equality and freedom and a harbinger of feminism, carried by a voice that would accept nothing less; and

**WHEREAS**, Ms. Franklin had a grandly celebrated career. She placed more than 100 singles in the Billboard charts, including 17 Top 10 pop singles and 20 No. 1 R&B hits. She received 18 competitive Grammy Awards, along with a lifetime achievement award in 1994. She was the first woman inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, in 1987, its second year. She sang at the inauguration of Barack Obama in 2009, at pre-inauguration concerts for Jimmy Carter in 1977 and Bill Clinton in 1993, and at both the Democratic National Convention and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s funeral in 1968; and

**WHEREAS**, Succeeding generations of R&B singers, among them Natalie Cole, Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey and Alicia Keys, openly emulated her. When Rolling Stone magazine put Ms. Franklin at the top of its 2010 list of the "100 Greatest Singers of All Time," Mary J. Blige paid tribute: Aretha is a gift from God. When it comes to expressing yourself through song, there is no one who can touch her. She is the reason why women want to sing"; and

**WHEREAS**, On August 13, 2018, Aretha was reported to be gravely ill at her home in Riverfront Towers, Detroit. She was reported to be under hospice care and surrounded by friends and family; now, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:**



That this council does hereby honor, recognize and celebrate the life of Ms. Aretha Franklin and extend this Council's sincerest condolences to her family and friends on the occasion of her passing, Thursday, August 16, 2018.