

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 121

BY SENATOR BISHOP

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the New Orleans City Council to develop a way to appropriately honor Antoine "Fats" Domino Jr. for his commitment to and history with the community, the city of New Orleans and the country.

WHEREAS, Antoine Dominique "Fats" Domino Jr. was born on February 26, 1928, in New Orleans, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Fats Domino as he was known throughout his music career, died on October 24, 2017, at the age of eighty-nine; and

WHEREAS, one of the pioneers of rock 'n roll music, Fats Domino sold more than sixty-five million records; his 1949 release "The Fat Man" is widely regarded as the first million-selling rock 'n roll record; and

WHEREAS, between 1955 and 1960, Fats Domino had eleven Top 10 hits and during his career, Fats Domino had thirty-five records in the U.S. Billboard Top 40, and five of his pre-1955 records sold more than a million copies, being certified gold; and

WHEREAS, his musical style was based on traditional rhythm and blues, accompanied by saxophones, bass, piano, electric guitar, and drums; and

WHEREAS, his humility and shyness may be one reason Fats Domino's contribution to the genre has been overlooked; and

WHEREAS, Fats Domino was one of the biggest stars of rock 'n roll in the 1950s and one of the first R&B artists to gain popularity with white audiences; his biographer Rick Coleman argues that Domino's records and tours with rock 'n roll shows in that decade, bringing together black and white youths in a shared appreciation of his music, was a factor in the breakdown of racial segregation in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Fats Domino was also an important influence on the music of the 1960s and 1970s and was acknowledged as such by some of the top artists of that era; and

WHEREAS, Elvis Presley introduced Fats at one of his Las Vegas concerts, saying,

"This gentleman was a huge influence on me when I started out"; and also made this comment in a 1957 interview: "A lot of people seem to think I started this business. But rock 'n roll was here a long time before I came along. Nobody can sing that music like colored people. Let's face it: I can't sing it like Fats Domino can. I know that"; and

WHEREAS, both John Lennon and Paul McCartney recorded Fats Domino songs; and

WHEREAS according to some reports, Paul McCartney wrote the Beatles song "Lady Madonna" in emulation of Domino's style, combining it with a nod to Humphrey Lyttelton's 1956 hit "Bad Penny Blues"; and

WHEREAS, Fats Domino returned to the "Hot 100" chart for the last time in 1968, with his recording of "Lady Madonna"; that recording, as well as covers of two other songs by the Beatles, appeared on his reprise album, Fats Is Back, produced by Richard Perry and with several hits recorded by a band that included the New Orleans pianist James Booker; and

WHEREAS, at a press conference when a journalist referred to Presley as "The King" after Elvis Presley's first concert at the Las Vegas Hilton on July 31, 1969, Elvis Presley gestured toward Fats Domino, who was taking in the scene, "No," Presley said, "that's the real king of rock 'n roll"; and

WHEREAS, John Lennon covered Domino's composition "Ain't That a Shame" on his 1975 album "Rock 'n Roll", his tribute to the musicians who had influenced him; and

WHEREAS, American band Cheap Trick recorded "Ain't That a Shame" on their 1978 live album Cheap Trick at Budokan and released it as the second single from the album; it reached 35 of the Billboard Hot 100; and reportedly, this was Fats Domino's favorite cover; and

WHEREAS, the Jamaican reggae artist Yellowman covered many songs by Fats Domino, including "Be My Guest" and "Blueberry Hill"; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, various artists came together for a tribute to Domino, recording a live session containing only his songs; musicians performing on the album, Goin' Home: A Tribute to Fats Domino, included Paul McCartney, Norah Jones, Willie Nelson, Neil Young, and Elton John; and

WHEREAS, Fats Domino was one of the most consistent artists of early rock music, the best-selling African-American rock 'n roll star of the 1950s, and the most popular singer of the "classic" New Orleans rhythm and blues style; and

WHEREAS, his million-selling debut single, "The Fat Man" (1949), is one of many that have been cited as the first rock 'n roll record; and Robert Christgau wrote that Domino was "the most widely liked rock 'n roller of the 50s" and remarked on his influence; and

WHEREAS, Fats Domino was characterized by many as a shy, deferential, uncharismatic man who invented New Orleans rock 'n roll.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the New Orleans City Council to develop a way to appropriately honor Antoine "Fats" Domino Jr. for his commitment to and history with the community, the city of New Orleans, and the country.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the New Orleans City Council.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE