

Rep. Clack offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 138.

A resolution commemorating June 2007 as Black Music Month in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, America's diverse and extraordinary musical heritage reflects the remarkable cultural and artistic history of our Nation. From gospel, blues, and jazz to rock and roll, rap, and hip-hop, our Nation's musical landscape offers an astounding array of uniquely American styles. During Black Music Month, we celebrate an important part of this heritage. Every American can appreciate and enjoy the fabulous achievements of this highly creative community; and

Whereas, Early forms of Black-American music developed out of the song, which had its roots in African tribal chants. Through this music, slaves shared stories, preserved history, and established a sense of community. Music became a source of strength and refuge. As many African slaves in early America became Christians, they adapted their music into songs and life of the church. These spirituals eventually evolved into gospel music that remains vibrant and very meaningful today. This great musical tradition developed under the leadership of Thomas Dorsey, who is known as the Father of Gospel Music. He composed many great gospel songs that have become standards, and he established the tradition of the gospel music concert; and

Whereas, Following emancipation, African-Americans enjoyed unprecedented opportunities but also faced many new oppressive challenges. Frustrations from these struggles for freedom and equality found expression in a style of music that came to be known as the blues. Innovative music geniuses, such as W.C. Handy, Robert Johnson, Reverend Gary Davis, and Mamie Smith were among the legendary pioneers of blues music; and

Whereas, As Blacks migrated throughout the United States in the early 1900s, they tapped into their collective experience and creativity to develop new expressions of music. New Orleans became the center for a particularly American form of music, jazz. This novel genre combined unique rhythm and melodies with the sounds of stringed, brass, and woodwind instruments. Jazz captured the interest of 20th century of America, making household names of great African-American artists like Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, Ella Fitzgerald, Cab Calloway, and Miles Davis. The unparalleled brilliance of these, and other great jazz musicians, had an extraordinary effect upon the American musical tradition, while bringing great pleasure to millions of fans; and

Whereas, In the 1940s, rhythm and blues emerged, synthesizing elements from gospel, blues, and jazz. From these styles came the birth of rock and roll. A fabulous array of artists helped to pioneer this modern musical transformation, including Chuck Berry, Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin, James Brown, and Gladys Knight; and

Whereas, Berry Gordy, an entrepreneur, started Motown Records in Detroit in the late 1950s. The music that Motown produced became the music of America's youth. This record company produced numerous artists, such as Diana Ross & The Supremes, The Temptations, Smokey Robinson & The Miracles, Marvin Gaye, and many others. "There was 'Nowhere To Run' to escape from the Motown sound, and with the onslaught of hits produced by Black-Americans that came out of Detroit, you couldn't listen to the music and say, 'It's The Same Old Song'," stated Speaker Andy Dillon; and

Whereas, Black musicians continue to evolve melodies and they have made new musical forms. In the late 1970s, a new form of music hit mainstream America, known as rap. Rap music has created a hip-hop culture which has left its indelible mark not only on America but the entire world through music, fashion, and various forms of communications. Just as Motown

Records did in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, hip-hop's entrepreneurs have broken down barriers which have segregated music; and

Whereas, As we reflect on the rich and distinctive history of so many talented artists, we celebrate the incredible contributions that Black musicians, songwriters, and producers have made on the history of American music and their influence on countless forms of music around the world; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body commemorate Black Music Month in the state of Michigan and honor the contributions that African-Americans made to this important art form. We celebrate a critically important part of the country's cultural heritage by highlighting the enduring legacy of African-American musicians, singers, and composers; and be it further

Resolved, We join with other organizations throughout the state and this country to pay tribute to those who have contributed to America's music; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Motown Museum in Detroit so that they know of our appreciation of Black-Americans' remarkable contributions to our musical heritage.