

SR-22, As Adopted by Senate, February 27, 2013

Senators Young, Bieda, Johnson, Hood, Hunter, Smith and Anderson offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 22.

A resolution commemorating the work of musician Sixto Rodriguez and the documentary film about his life, "Searching for Sugar Man."

Whereas, Sixto Rodriguez, sixth child of Mexican immigrants, born in Detroit, Michigan, released two albums with no commercial success in the United States of America and limited success in Australia. He retired from music, pursued his education, and received a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy from Wayne State University; and

Whereas, He discovered much later that his music had enjoyed great political and commercial success in South Africa. There, his stories of the struggles of the inner-city poor resonated with the strongly segregated population. His music became the voice of a censored generation; one that was told how to act, what to watch, what to listen to, and with whom to associate. Sixto Rodriguez raised questions of segregation, equality, poverty, and opportunity that rallied a poor youth searching for a voice and a sheltered youth seeking to learn about the struggles of their neighbors. He was able to simultaneously reach these two radically different groups of young South Africans, and his songs became anthems of the anti-Apartheid movement and rallying cries for change; and

Whereas, Sixto Rodriguez has enjoyed much recent success in the United States following the release of the film "Searching for Sugar Man." The film catalogues two fans' search for Rodriguez after his album went platinum in South Africa, despite rumors of his suicide. He could not address the rumors of his death or capitalize on his fame because he was unaware of it for many years. "Searching for Sugar Man" invigorated his career. Sixto Rodriguez is currently touring again and has been interviewed by numerous programs in 2012 and 2013, including the news program "60 Minutes" and a variety of late-night talk shows. The documentary was the opening film at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival, won the Writers Guild Award for best documentary screenplay, and to further support its noteworthy success, the film won the 85th Academy Award for best documentary feature on Sunday, February 24, 2013; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we hereby commemorate the music of Sixto Rodriguez, its power across cultures and time to affect change and resonate with us today, and the documentary film "Searching for Sugar Man," which it inspired; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to Sixto Rodriguez, the director of the film, Malik Bendjelloul, and the producers of the film, Simon Chinn and John Battsek.