

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. _____

Honoring the life and legacy of Dolly Parton, a daughter of Tennessee whose extraordinary contributions to music, philanthropy, literacy, education, health, conservation, and culture enriched the lives of countless Americans.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. HAGERTY, and Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on

RESOLUTION

Honoring the life and legacy of Dolly Parton, a daughter of Tennessee whose extraordinary contributions to music, philanthropy, literacy, education, health, conservation, and culture enriched the lives of countless Americans.

Whereas Dolly Rebecca Parton was born the fourth of 12 children on January 19, 1946, to Robert Lee Parton and Avie Lee Parton in Locust Ridge, Sevier County, Tennessee, where faith, family, music, and the traditions of Appalachia inspired her lifelong calling to serve others with humility and grace;

Whereas, in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains, Dolly Parton developed an enduring love of music and a profound faith in her childhood, singing in her grand-

father's church, writing songs, and, at the age of 10, regularly performing on the Cas Walker Show in Knoxville, Tennessee;

Whereas, in 1959, Dolly Parton made her first appearance at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee, where she was introduced by Johnny Cash and received 3 encores;

Whereas, after graduating from Sevier County High School, Dolly Parton moved to Nashville to pursue a career in music and became one of the most celebrated singer-songwriters in American history;

Whereas Dolly Parton wrote and recorded songs that became timeless classics of the American songbook, including "Jolene", "Coat of Many Colors", "I Will Always Love You", and "9 to 5", while consistently drawing inspiration from her childhood, family, faith, and her East Tennessee mountain heritage;

Whereas Dolly Parton earned her first number-1 single on the Billboard Hot Country Songs chart with "Joshua" in 1970 and went on to receive numerous accolades throughout her career, including Country Music Association Awards for Female Vocalist of the Year and Entertainer of the Year and a Grammy Award for "Here You Come Again";

Whereas Dolly Parton used the success she achieved throughout her career to give back to the communities and people who shaped her life, establishing a legacy of philanthropy rooted in her home State of Tennessee;

Whereas, in 1986, Dolly Parton opened Dollywood in the Great Smoky Mountains of East Tennessee, establishing a world-class theme park that has become a premier

tourist destination, creating jobs and drawing millions of visitors to the region each year;

Whereas Dolly Parton established The Dollywood Foundation in 1988 in Sevier County, Tennessee, as a nonprofit organization initially dedicated to improving educational achievement and reducing high school dropout rates among children in her home community;

Whereas, through The Dollywood Foundation, Dolly Parton established the Buddy Program in Sevier County to encourage students to remain in school including by awarding financial incentives to participating students who successfully graduated, demonstrating her early commitment to creating educational opportunities for young Tennesseans;

Whereas, in 1995, Dolly Parton established Dolly Parton's Imagination Library through The Dollywood Foundation, inspired by her father, Robert Lee Parton, who could not read or write;

Whereas the Imagination Library began by providing books to children in Dolly Parton's home county and grew into an international book-gifting program providing free, age-appropriate books to children from birth to age 5 regardless of family income;

Whereas the Imagination Library expanded from the mountains of East Tennessee to communities throughout the United States and around the world, demonstrating how an act of service beginning in a rural Tennessee community can improve the lives of millions of children and families;

Whereas, in 2014, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library was recognized through the Library of Congress Literacy

Awards for its work promoting literacy, and, in 2018, Dolly Parton donated the 100,000,000th book distributed through the program to the Library of Congress;

Whereas Dolly Parton extended her commitment to the people of East Tennessee to health care, helping raise \$1,000,000 in 2007 for the birthing unit at LeConte Medical Center in Sevier County, an effort that contributed to the establishment of the Dolly Parton Center for Women's Services and expanded health care resources for women and families in the region;

Whereas Dolly Parton also supported the Pediatric Cancer Program at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, further demonstrating her longstanding commitment to improving the health and well-being of children;

Whereas Dolly Parton later continued her support for medical research in Tennessee by donating an additional \$1,000,000 to Vanderbilt University Medical Center in 2022 to support pediatric infectious disease research;

Whereas Dolly Parton's philanthropy extended to the protection of wildlife and the natural heritage of Tennessee, and, beginning in 1991, Dollywood partnered with the American Eagle Foundation to advance the conservation, care, and public understanding of bald eagles and other birds of prey;

Whereas Eagle Mountain Sanctuary at Dollywood became home to non-releasable bald eagles and provided millions of visitors with opportunities to learn about the conservation of the national bird and other wildlife;

Whereas the partnership between Dollywood and the American Eagle Foundation contributed to decades of con-

servation and education efforts, during which the American Eagle Foundation successfully released more than 400 bald eagles into the wild;

Whereas, following the wildfires that devastated Sevier County and the Great Smoky Mountains region in November 2016, destroying homes and displacing families in the community where she was raised, Dolly Parton directed The Dollywood Foundation to establish the My People Fund;

Whereas The Dollywood Foundation created the My People Fund within weeks of the fires to provide direct financial assistance to families who had lost their primary residences;

Whereas the My People Fund ultimately distributed more than \$12,000,000 to families affected by the Sevier County wildfires and provided additional assistance, including scholarships for graduating seniors whose homes had been destroyed;

Whereas Dolly Parton continued to respond to the needs of her fellow Tennesseans and neighboring communities throughout her life, including following Hurricane Helene in 2024, when Dolly Parton and her associated businesses and organizations committed more than \$2,000,000 to support relief and recovery efforts in Tennessee and North Carolina;

Whereas Dolly Parton died on August 25, 2026, at the age of 80, leaving behind an extraordinary legacy of music, philanthropy, service, generosity, and love for her fellow Tennesseans and Americans;

Whereas, despite achieving international fame, Dolly Parton remained deeply connected to Sevier County and the

State of Tennessee and repeatedly directed her resources, influence, and time toward improving the lives of the people of her home State;

Whereas Dolly Parton's philanthropic service reflected a consistent commitment to children, education, health, families facing hardship, disaster recovery, wildlife conservation, and the communities of East Tennessee;

Whereas Dolly Parton's life demonstrated that success is measured not only by personal achievement, but by the opportunities created for others and by a willingness to serve neighbors in times of need;

Whereas Dolly Parton embodied the values of faith, hard work, perseverance, generosity, kindness, creativity, and service to others that are deeply rooted in the history and character of Tennessee, the Volunteer State; and

Whereas the life of Dolly Parton represents both an extraordinary American story and a uniquely Tennessee story, demonstrating how faith, talent, determination, generosity, and an enduring love of home can change lives throughout the world: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) mourns the passing of Dolly Parton and ex-
3 tends its deepest condolences to her family, friends,
4 loved ones, and the people of Tennessee;

5 (2) honors the extraordinary life and legacy of
6 Dolly Parton and her contributions to the State of
7 Tennessee and the United States;

8 (3) recognizes Dolly Parton's lasting contribu-
9 tions to American music, songwriting, entertain-

1 ment, education, childhood literacy, health care,
2 medical research, disaster relief, conservation, and
3 philanthropy;

4 (4) recognizes The Dollywood Foundation and
5 Dolly Parton's Imagination Library as enduring ex-
6 pressions of Dolly Parton's commitment to providing
7 children and families with opportunities to learn,
8 thrive, and build better lives;

9 (5) recognizes Dolly Parton's extraordinary de-
10 votion to Tennessee, the Volunteer State, and her
11 decades of service to the communities that shaped
12 her life;

13 (6) recognizes Dolly Parton's extraordinary and
14 enduring contributions to American culture and phi-
15 lanthropy, including her induction into the Country
16 Music Hall of Fame in 1999, receipt of the Library
17 of Congress Living Legend Medal in 2004, and re-
18 ceipt of the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy in
19 2022, honoring her remarkable legacy of artistic
20 achievement, generosity, and service to others;

21 (7) recognizes that Dolly Parton used her suc-
22 cess and national platform not merely for personal
23 achievement, but to serve others, including children
24 learning to read, families rebuilding after natural
25 disasters, patients benefitting from medical research,

1 and communities preserving America’s natural herit-
2 age;

3 (8) encourages the people of the United States
4 to honor Dolly Parton’s memory by carrying forward
5 her example of charity, kindness, service, persever-
6 ance, and love of community; and

7 (9) honors Dolly Parton’s lifelong commitment
8 to her dream to, in her words, “make as many peo-
9 ple happy as I could in this life,” and recognizes
10 that her extraordinary life and legacy fulfilled that
11 dream for generations of Americans.