



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE CHICAGO STEPPIN' COMMUNITY IN RECOGNITION OF JUNE AS BLACK MUSIC MONTH

WHEREAS, African American Music Appreciation Month is an annual celebration of African American music in the United States. It was initiated as Black Music Month by President Jimmy Carter who, on June 7, 1979, decreed that June would be the month of black music; and,

WHEREAS, In 2009, the commemoration was given its current name by President Barack Obama.[1] In his 2016 proclamation, Obama noted that African-American music and musicians have helped the country "to dance, to express our faith through song, to march against injustice, and to defend our country's enduring promise of freedom and opportunity for all. And, Cook County, which Chicago is a municipality, is where many original dance and music art forms have started such as The Chicago Steppin art form that's now world that originated around June 1979; and,

WHEREAS, The Chicago Steppin' Community began in the 1970's and it spread rapidly throughout the country with "Thoughts and Wishes" by Bohannon in 1975, "Loves Gonna Last," by Jeffree in 1978, "Mellow Mellow Right On" by Lowell Simon in 1979, and "I Choose You" by Paris Holley in 1984 and many more. These hits and others from Chicago became the national anthems of Steppin'; and,

WHEREAS, at this early time, Gus Redmond, Music Guru, and Carl Davis, Sr., President and C.E.O. and Otis Leavill Vice President of Chi-Sound Music Group Records began the widespread promotion of "Steppin'; and,

WHEREAS, The World's Largest Steppers Contest founded by Rodney Burke, Anheuser-Busch Distribution Executive, Barry Mayo, V103 Radio Executive VP, Merry Green Promotions Director V103; and Curtis Cooper Sales Executive; and,

WHEREAS, much of the capital needed for the contest and promotion came through, Rodney Burke Anheuser-Busch Distribution Manager and Terry Bell, Budweiser Distribution Co-owner; and,

WHEREAS, Steppin' came out of boppin' and walkin' from two social clubs *Tom Cats Social Club* on the West Side. Carl Merritt, founded the club together with Alvin Walker, Ronnie Copland, Greg Pierce, Gerry Armstrong and Jeff Navy and *The Original Olde Timers Steppin' Social Club* on the South Side which Black Mary founded along with Kitty Neely, Yvonne Paramore, Lula Taylor, Sandra Swayne and the 1970's DJ Clubs *Two Below* on the West Side, *The Taste* on the South Side and *The Cop Her Box* on the Far South Side; and,

WHEREAS, The growth of the Chicago Steppin' Community continued through Sam Chatman, the godfather of the Steppin' DJ's, and his assistant, Tyrone Foster ,together with Kitty Neeley, the first female Steppin' DJ/Host on WJPC Radio and Reggie Miles, DJ at WKKC Radio at Kennedy King College, and DJ Kenny B. Thompson who brought Steppin' to an even broader audience through V103 Radio; and,

WHEREAS, Many other DJ's including Big Bob Simmons, Willie Cox, George Harris, Ken Samuels, Bill Magness, Alvia McNeal, Ed James, Ernest Lansby, Steve Breeze Brewer, Eric ET Taylor, Dinahlynn Biggs, host of internet radio, Lamont Watts Internet Station Owner, brought Steppin' Music forward along with the thousands of Steppin' DJ's around the world today to continue this amazing Steppin' movement; and promoters including the National Ambassador of

Steppin' Peter Frazier and the Legendary William Barnett, World renowned Steppin' promoter Ken Bedford; and,

WHEREAS, Marshall Thompson of the Chi-Lites, the godfather of vocal groups, continues to this day with "Low Key" and the breakout of Chicago Steppin' to the world; and,

WHEREAS, a part of the ongoing commitment to this rich tradition, radio stations V103 Chicago, WKKC 89.3 FM Chicago and Clubsteppin 95.1 FM have dedicated their stations to airing Steppin' Music across Cook County in support of Cook Countries new "Physically Distancing apart while being Socially Connected"; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the residents of Cook County, **Honor the Chicago Steppin' Community in recognition of June as Black Music Month** as an original music art form that's now celebrated around the world and we praise its essential contribution to the health and viability of Cook County. A suitable copy of this resolution will be presented to the members of this committee after completion of this pandemic.