

2015-K1602

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION celebrating the legendary life and accomplishments of Muhammad Ali, three-time World heavyweight boxing champion

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to acknowledge outstanding athletes who distinguish themselves through their exceptional performance, attaining unprecedented success and the highest level of personal achievement; and

WHEREAS, It is with great sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of the legendary Muhammad Ali, noting the significance of his purposeful life and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Widely regarded as one of the most significant and celebrated sporting figures of the 20th Century, Muhammad Ali died on Friday, June 3, 2016, in Scottsdale, Arizona, at the age of 74; and

WHEREAS, Born Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr. on January 17, 1942, in Louisville, Kentucky, to Cassius Marcellus Clay, Sr. and Odessa O'Grady Clay, Muhammad Ali became interested in boxing at a young age when his bicycle was stolen; Louisville Police Officer and Boxing Coach Joe E. Martin suggested to the irate 12 year-old that he should learn to box to ensure it would never happen again; and

WHEREAS, Cassius Clay, Jr. made his amateur boxing debut in 1954; he would go on to win six Kentucky Golden Gloves titles, two national Golden Gloves titles, an Amateur Athletic Union national title, and the Light Heavyweight gold medal in the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome, Italy; his amateur record was 100 wins with five losses; and

WHEREAS, Cassius Clay, Jr. made his professional debut on October 29, 1960, under the direction of trainer and mentor Angelo Dundee, who would remain with him throughout his 21 year career, before retiring in 1981; and

WHEREAS, In his first professional match, Cassius Clay, Jr. won a

six-round decision over Tunney Hunsaker; from then until the end of 1963, he amassed a record of 19-0 with 15 wins by knockout; and WHEREAS, Cassius Clay, Jr. defeated numerous boxers including Tony Esperti, Jim Robinson, Donnie Fleeman, Alonzo Johnson, George Logan, Willi Besmanoff, Lamar Clark, Doug Jones and Henry Cooper; in addition, he defeated his former trainer and veteran boxer Archie Moore in a 1962 match; and

WHEREAS, At the age of 22, Cassius Clay, Jr. became a top contender for Sonny Liston's World Heavyweight Title; he declared himself "The Greatest," promising his fans he would, "float like a butterfly and sting like a bee," while defeating Sonny Liston; the fight lasted only seven rounds as Liston failed to answer the bell and Clay was declared the winner and new World Heavyweight Champion by TKO; and

WHEREAS, Shortly after capturing the title, Cassius Clay, Jr. converted to the Muslim religion and adopted the name of Muhammad Ali which was personally chosen for him by Minister Elijah Muhammad, the Leader of the Nation of Islam; and

WHEREAS, A symbol of Black Pride, Muhammad Ali spoke up about racial injustice and demonstrated to the African-American community that they were entitled to their dignity; and

WHEREAS, Classifying himself as a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War, on April 28, 1967, Muhammad Ali refused to be inducted into U.S. Armed Forces; soon thereafter he was unjustly stripped of the World Heavyweight Championship, was denied a boxing license in every state, and had his passport taken away; and

WHEREAS, Convicted of draft evasion on June 20, 1967, Muhammad Ali was sentenced to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine; while appealing the decision, and being unable to fight or leave the country, Muhammad

Ali began speaking on college campuses, discussing matters of racial equality and anti-war activism; and

WHEREAS, On June 28, 1971, Muhammad Ali's conviction was overturned by

the United States Supreme Court by a unanimous 8-0 decision; and
WHEREAS, After a nearly four year suspension, Muhammad Ali returned to boxing in October of 1970; on March 8, 1971, he squared off with then heavyweight champion, Joe Frazier, at Madison Square Garden in what was billed as the "Fight of the Century"; the match was broadcasted to 35 foreign countries; and

WHEREAS, Defeating Joe Frazier in their 1974 rematch set the stage for a title fight against heavyweight champion George Foreman in Kinshasa, Zaire, on October 30, 1974; during this bout, nicknamed "The Rumble in the Jungle," Muhammad Ali knocked him out in the 8th round and regained the heavyweight title; and

WHEREAS, He then faced Joe Frazier for the third and final time in the "Thrilla in Manila," a bout held in the Philippines in 1975; in the 15th round Muhammad Ali won by TKO; and

WHEREAS, Due to his successful boxing career, Muhammad Ali became an international celebrity; he starred in the 1977 film adaptation of his autobiography, "The Greatest"; and

WHEREAS, In 1984, Muhammad Ali was diagnosed with Parkinson's syndrome but would later be identified as Parkinson's disease; despite his illness, he remained active with several public appearances such as the 1987 Tournament of Roses Parade, lit the flame at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, and was on the set of the 2001 film entitled "Ali" starring Will Smith; and

WHEREAS, Remembered by countless fans, friends and family members, Muhammad Ali is survived by his fourth wife, Yolanda ("Lonnie") Williams; nine children, Laila Ali, Rasheda Ali, Hana Ali, Asaad Amin, Maryum Ali, Jamillah Ali, Khaliah Ali, Muhammad Ali Jr., Miya Ali; and a brother, Rahman Ali; and

WHEREAS, A gifted athlete, Muhammad Ali was a renowned legend in the sport of professional boxing; after more than two decades, his character and achievements stand as a sterling example and inspiration to all who would aspire to succeed; he will be deeply missed and truly merits the

grateful tribute of this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to
celebrate the legendary life and accomplishments of Muhammad Ali, three-
time World heavyweight boxing champion, and to express its deepest
condolences to his family; and be it further

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RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be tran-
smitted to the family of Muhammad Ali.