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MEMORANDUM

To: All House Members
From: Representative Austin Davis
Date: August 17, 2018
Subject: Honoring the Life and Accomplishments of Aretha Franklin

Sorrowfully, we have lost a national icon. The duly named “Queen of Soul” and musical legend, Aretha Franklin, lost her battle with cancer on Thursday, August 16, 2018. It is fitting that we honor the life and accomplishments of this monumental figure, which is why I plan to introduce a resolution doing so.

Through a career that spanned over half a century, Aretha Franklin’s songs did more than simply top the music charts; they became part of our cultural vernacular. We remember hits such as “Respect” and “Think” not just for their melodious rhythms, but also for standing as beacons of racial and gender empowerment.

At age 14, Aretha began her career recording gospel music, but soon expanded her repertoire to become what Rolling Stone called “one of the most influential and important voices in pop history.” During the peak of her career, she had over twenty-four Top 40 hits. And, in her lifetime, she won eighteen Grammy awards, including recognition for best female R&B performance in eight straight years.

She used her fame for more than personal benefit, becoming one of the most charitable musical stars of her day. She supported an expansive spectrum of causes – raising money to combat childhood diabetes and malnutrition, promoting efforts toward rainforest preservation, and providing resources for at-risk youth. Truly, her legacy expands far beyond her music.

Join me in honoring the life and accomplishments of this influential woman by co-sponsoring this timely and fitting resolution.