

By: Hochberg

H.R. No. 514

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The great American composer and singer, Deborah Lynn
2 "Debbie" Friedman, has been credited with creating the genre of
3 contemporary Jewish worship music; and

4 WHEREAS, Debbie Friedman composed much of her early music
5 while residing in Houston, Texas from 1975 to 1984; and

6 WHEREAS, Her modern settings of traditional Hebrew liturgy
7 and original compositions are sung by congregants in Reform,
8 Reconstructionist, Conservative and some Modern Orthodox Jewish
9 synagogues, as well as in some Christian churches; and

10 WHEREAS, Debbie Friedman was called "the Joan Baez of Jewish
11 song," by the Jewish newspaper *The Forward* and recorded more than 20
12 albums, which together sold half a million copies, and her lyrics
13 have appeared on Hallmark greeting cards; and

14 WHEREAS, Her "Mi Shebeirach" prayer for healing is used by
15 hundreds of congregations across America and is a central part of
16 the Jewish healing movement, and her "Alef Bet Song" has been
17 performed by Barney, the purple dinosaur and has taught two
18 generations of Jewish children the Hebrew alphabet; and

19 WHEREAS, Deborah Lynn "Debbie" Friedman was born in Utica,
20 New York to Freda and Gabriel Friedman; and

21 WHEREAS, Debbie moved with her family to Minnesota at age 5,
22 where she was a 1969 alumna of Highland Park High School in Saint
23 Paul and a graduate of the after-school Hebrew school program at the
24 Talmud Torah of St. Paul; and

1 WHEREAS, She wrote her earliest songs as a song leader at the
2 overnight camp Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute in Oconomowoc,
3 Wisconsin and recorded her first album, "*Sing Unto God*", with the
4 choir of her former high school in 1972; and

5 WHEREAS, Rabbi Samuel Karff brought Ms. Friedman to Houston
6 in 1975, where she taught at Temple Beth Israel and at Congregation
7 Beth Yeshurun while writing many of her compositions and,
8 coincidentally, living in the district of Representative Paul
9 Colbert, who was her Hebrew school classmate for nine years in St.
10 Paul; and

11 WHEREAS, after leaving her many friends in Houston, Debbie
12 Friedman continued to compose and performed her songs in concerts
13 at venues throughout the world, including her live recordings to
14 sold-out audiences at Carnegie Hall and the Hotel del Coronado,
15 despite struggling with a debilitating neurological condition; and

16 WHEREAS, The story of her music, as well as the challenges she
17 faced in living with illness, were featured in a 2004 documentary
18 film called *A Journey of Spirit*; and

19 WHEREAS, Ms. Friedman became a teacher at Hebrew Union
20 College-Jewish Institute of Religion, first in New York and later
21 in Los Angeles and served on the board of the Academy for Jewish
22 Religion, CA; and

23 WHEREAS, Deborah Lynn Friedman succumbed to pneumonia on
24 January 9, 2011 and her memorial service on the opening day of this
25 Legislative Session was attended and watched on the internet by
26 almost ten thousand of her family, friends and admirers; and

27 WHEREAS, Deborah Lynn Friedman is survived by her mother,

1 Freda, and her sisters Cheryl Friedman and Barbara Egli; and

2 WHEREAS, Debbie Friedman's songs, including "Mi Shebeirach",
3 "L'chi Lach", "Miriam's Song", "Oseh Shalom", "Not By Might", "And
4 Thou Shalt Love", "The Alef Bet Song", "You Are the One", "This is
5 the Day" and many, many others have inspired and comforted millions
6 and will continue to be sung and remembered as a fitting legacy to
7 this caring and inspiring person; now, therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas
9 hereby pay tribute to the life of Deborah Lynn "Debbie" Friedman and
10 extend sincere sympathy to the members of her family: to her mother,
11 Freda; to her sisters, Cheryl and Barbara; and to her other
12 relatives and many friends; and, be it further

13 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
14 prepared for her family.