



## Legislation Text

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### Res. No. 623

Resolution designating May 21 annually as Christopher “Biggie Smalls” Wallace Day in the City of New York and recognizing his contributions to the cultural landscape of his home borough of Brooklyn and to Hip Hop worldwide.

By Council Members Ossé, Cabán, Riley, Louis, Farías, Rivera, Sanchez, Nurse and Hudson

Whereas, Christopher George Latore Wallace was born on May 21, 1972, in Brooklyn to Jamaican parents and became one of Hip Hop’s greatest stars, known to his many fans as Biggie Smalls (“Biggie”) and The Notorious B.I.G.; and

Whereas, Biggie was raised in Bedford-Stuyvesant, where landmarks from his life and his music abound, including the subway stop seen in the music video for his acclaimed song “Juicy,” which marked his “evolution from street hustler to successful musician,” according to *Rolling Stone* magazine; and

Whereas, After Biggie started his rap career as a teenager, a recording of his found its way to Sean “Puff Daddy” or “P. Diddy” Combs, who then worked for Uptown Records and signed Biggie to a record deal; and

Whereas, Biggie soon followed Combs to his new and now legendary label, Bad Boy Records, in 1992; and

Whereas, Biggie’s first album, *Ready to Die*, released as The Notorious B.I.G., came out on Bad Boy Records in September 1994 and became phenomenally successful, going gold in two months and eventually quadruple platinum; and

Whereas, “Big Poppa,” the second of four singles from *Ready to Die* was nominated for a Grammy Award for best rap solo performance in 1996; and

Whereas, On August 4, 1994, Biggie married Faith Evans, an R&B singer who was featured on “One

More Chance,” which was the fourth single from *Ready to Die* and which eventually went platinum; and

Whereas, By the end of 1995, Biggie was the best-selling solo male artist on the Hip Hop, pop, and R&B Billboard charts and was named MC of the Year at the Billboard Music Awards; and

Whereas, Biggie is credited with reinvigorating the East Coast Hip Hop scene as an artist with Bad Boy Records after the West Coast sound produced by Death Row Records had surged ahead in the early 1990s; and

Whereas, In 1993, Biggie travelled to Los Angeles and met rapper Tupac Shakur, who became a mentor to Biggie; and

Whereas, Tupac’s shooting in a recording studio lobby in New York City (NYC) on November 30, 1994, led to ongoing recriminations between the two rappers over Biggie’s alleged role in the attack and other personal issues; and

Whereas, Those recriminations continued to surface from East Coast and West Coast rappers when Tupac died at the age of 25 as a result of a shooting in Las Vegas on September 7, 1996; and

Whereas, Just months later, on March 9, 1997, Biggie was shot to death at the age of 24 as he left a party in Los Angeles, where he had gone to attend the Soul Train Music Awards and to work toward ending the rivalry and animosity between East Coast and West Coast rappers; and

Whereas, Two weeks later, Bad Boy Records posthumously released Biggie’s *Life After Death* double album, which went on to receive three Grammy nominations and went diamond in 2000, selling more than 10 million copies; and

Whereas, Biggie’s well-known baritone and towering presence continued to be an important part of the Hip Hop scene posthumously, with two more albums released in 1999 and 2005; and

Whereas, Biggie was known for his ability to tell stories from his own life, including from his drug-dealing days, such that Combs remarked in a *New York Times* story that Biggie was “giving up all his vulnerability”; and

Whereas, Biggie’s ability to show that vulnerability, with songs like “Suicidal Thoughts” and

“Warning,” showed his fans and the music world that he was more than just a part of the gangsta rap scene that he was so often known for; and

Whereas, Biggie will always be remembered for a long list of great songs, including “Hypnotize,” “Mo Money Mo Problems,” “Gimme the Loot,” “I Got a Story to Tell,” “Kick the Door,” “Things Done Changed,” “Unbelievable,” “Everyday Struggle,” and “Sky’s the Limit”; and

Whereas, Biggie, whose musical talents were also respected outside of Hip Hop, was inducted posthumously into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2020; and

Whereas, In an article on the 25th anniversary of Biggie’s death, *Rolling Stone* magazine noted that if Biggie “isn’t the greatest rapper ever (he is), then he’s the most respected” and that his “narrative mastery, linguistic joy, dizzyingly rhythmic flows, emotional depth, and wry wisdom have never been equaled”; and

Whereas, Hip Hop, now in its 50th anniversary year, continues to thrive and contribute to NYC’s culture and economy; and

Whereas, It is fitting to dedicate a day to commemorate Biggie’s remarkable impact on the music world as one of the all-time greats of Hip Hop culture in NYC and beyond; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York designates May 21 annually as Christopher “Biggie Smalls” Wallace Day in the City of New York and recognizes his contributions to the cultural landscape of his home borough of Brooklyn and to Hip Hop worldwide.

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3/29/2023  
RHP