

# 2026 SESSION

INTRODUCED

26100546D

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 19

Offered January 14, 2026

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5  
4 Commemorating the life and legacy of Gene Vincent.

6 Patron—DeSteph

7 WHEREAS, Vincent Eugene Craddock, known internationally by his stage name Gene Vincent, helped  
8 reshape the American musical landscape in the 1950s through his contributions to early rock and roll music;  
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Vincent Craddock was born in 1935 to Mary Louise and Ezekiah Jackson Craddock and  
11 grew up in Princess Anne County's Munden Point neighborhood, a diverse and culturally mixed community,  
12 where his parents ran a general store; and

13 WHEREAS, at age 12, Vincent Craddock received a guitar from a friend and began to develop his  
14 distinctive musical style; he was heavily influenced by country, blues, and gospel music, as well as classical  
15 composers such as Beethoven, and he was often mentored by a cherished neighbor, Cleon Hoggard; and

16 WHEREAS, Vincent Craddock left school at age 17 to enlist in the United States Navy and served as a  
17 crew member aboard the USS *Chukawan* during the Korean War before returning home aboard the USS  
18 *Wisconsin*; and

19 WHEREAS, in 1955, after returning to the Commonwealth, Vincent Craddock was critically injured in an  
20 automobile crash, which left him with chronic pain and a permanent metal brace in one leg, ultimately  
21 leading to his honorable discharge from the United States Navy; and

22 WHEREAS, Vincent Craddock subsequently entered the local music scene and adopted the stage name  
23 Gene Vincent; despite his physical limitations, he formed a groundbreaking rockabilly band, Gene Vincent  
24 and His Blue Caps, which included several talented teenage musicians from Portsmouth; and

25 WHEREAS, in 1956, Gene Vincent wrote and recorded "Be-Bop-A-Lula," which helped him secure a  
26 contract from Capitol Records and launched his career as an international musical phenomenon and one of  
27 the defining pioneers of early rock and roll; and

28 WHEREAS, Gene Vincent followed up on that initial success with the release of his debut studio album  
29 *Bluejean Bop!* and several other popular songs he wrote or recorded, including "Woman Love," "Race with  
30 the Devil," "Blue Jean Bop," "Lotta Lovin'," and "Dance to the Bop," solidifying his reputation as a dynamic  
31 and innovative artist whose music shaped generations to come; and

32 WHEREAS, Gene Vincent's work profoundly influenced many of the world's most celebrated musicians,  
33 including members of The Beatles, who admired his artistry and recognized his importance in the evolution  
34 of modern popular music; and

35 WHEREAS, Gene Vincent continued to perform and record throughout the United States, the United  
36 Kingdom, Europe, Japan, and Australia, bringing his groundbreaking sound to global audiences and leaving a  
37 lasting mark on international music culture, until his death at age 36 in 1971; and

38 WHEREAS, Gene Vincent inspired generations of rock and roll artists, and "Be-Bop-A-Lula" has been  
39 covered by some of the biggest names in the music industry, including Elvis Presley, Paul McCartney, John  
40 Lennon, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, Freddie Mercury, Tom Jones, Stray Cats, The Everly Brothers, and  
41 Mark Knopfler, demonstrating the enduring cultural resonance of his work; and

42 WHEREAS, in recognition of his achievements, Gene Vincent became the first inductee of the Rockabilly  
43 Hall of Fame after it was established in 1997 and was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame by John  
44 Fogerty in 1998; his contributions have also been celebrated in the Virginia Musical Museum's exhibit on  
45 Virginia music artists; and

46 WHEREAS, in addition, Gene Vincent received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and a bronze star  
47 on Norfolk's Legends of Music Walk of Fame; and

48 WHEREAS, through his groundbreaking contributions to American music and global culture, Gene  
49 Vincent remains one of the Commonwealth's most influential and enduring musical icons; now, therefore, be  
50 it

51 RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby  
52 commemorate the life and legacy of Gene Vincent on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of his passing;  
53 and, be it

54 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare six copies of this resolution for  
55 presentation to Gene Vincent's daughter, Sherri Vincent, for distribution to his daughter, Melody Jean  
56 Vincent, as well as his grandchildren through his late son, Vincent Eugene Craddock, Jr., Chantel Craddock,  
57 Vincent Craddock, Olivia McCulloch, and Zachary Craddock, as an expression of the General Assembly's  
58 respect for Gene Vincent's memory and admiration for his exceptional career and contributions to popular

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**59** music around the world.