

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 89

*Commending Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion.*

Agreed to by the Senate, March 5, 2026

WHEREAS, for 25 years, Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion has brought together musicians, artists, residents, and visitors from across the nation and around the world to celebrate Bristol's unique role as the "Birthplace of Country Music"; and

WHEREAS, established in 2001, Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion is a community driven, grassroots project that honors the deep musical traditions of Appalachia and fosters a shared appreciation for roots music, cultural heritage, and creative expression; and

WHEREAS, Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion has grown into one of the region's premier cultural events, serving as a nationally recognized showcase for Appalachian music and arts while reinforcing Bristol's identity as a center of musical innovation and authenticity; and

WHEREAS, Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion has generated significant economic benefits for the region by attracting tourism, supporting local businesses, creating jobs, and contributing to the long-term revitalization of downtown Bristol and surrounding communities; and

WHEREAS, the ongoing success of Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion reflects the strength of cross-border collaboration between Bristol, Tennessee, and Bristol, Virginia, demonstrating how shared cultural assets can unite communities, strengthen regional partnerships, and advance common economic and civic goals; and

WHEREAS, since 2012, Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion has been organized by the Birthplace of Country Music nonprofit organization, which also manages the Smithsonian Institution-affiliated Birthplace of Country Music Museum and the Radio Bristol radio station; the organization invests in education, youth programming, and community engagement, ensuring that the region's musical traditions are preserved and passed on to future generations while encouraging new voices and creative growth; and

WHEREAS, Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion has achieved its mission through the hard work and dedication of numerous organizers, staff members, volunteers, artists, sponsors, and community partners, as well as the visionary leadership of executive director Leah Ross; and

WHEREAS, the longevity of Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion reflects its sustained excellence, adaptability, and community support and underscores the festival's importance as a cultural institution and a model for arts-driven regional development; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion hereby be commended for preserving the history and musical heritage of Appalachia on the occasion of its 25th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Leah Ross, former executive director of Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion, as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for the festival's role in strengthening regional identity, pride, and collaboration.

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