

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 621

Introduced by Garrett, 3; Ebke, 32.

WHEREAS, the late Okie from Muskogee, Merle "The Pearl" Haggard, an embodiment of the American dream, was born in a boxcar in Oildale, California, on April 6, 1937; and

WHEREAS, Merle's mama, Flossie Mae Haggard, tried to raise him better. Flossie worked as a bookkeeper during the Great Depression and encouraged Merle's interest in the guitar while ensuring that he got some "Sunday Learning" after her husband, James Haggard, died of a brain hemorrhage when Merle was only nine; and

WHEREAS, despite all his Sunday learning, toward the bad Merle kept on turning, until the night the bottle let Merle down and he ended up in a juvenile detention facility; and

WHEREAS, after leaving the juvenile detention facility, the lonesome fugitive started his love affair with trains by running away and riding freight trains to Texas to live out the legend of Bonnie and Clyde; and

WHEREAS, the legend ended when Merle was picked up for attempted robbery and sent to jail; and

WHEREAS, yet again one night the bottle let Merle down, and after being caught drunk in prison he was sent to spend a week in solitary confinement where, like Hank Williams before him, he said, "I saw the light"; and

WHEREAS, Merle eventually made it through December, was released from prison, and caught the rambling fever-the type that can't be measured in degrees-and started a successful career in the country music business; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, Governor Ronald Reagan expunged the Lonesome Fugitive Kentucky Gambler's criminal record after Merle remembered the roots of his raising; and

WHEREAS, ever since his pardon, Merle has rode the freedom train, until passing away on his 79th birthday; and

WHEREAS, If We Make It Through December, or the end of session, Someday We'll Look Back on the Old Man from the Mountain and he won't ever have to ask "I Wonder If They Ever Think of Me?"; and

WHEREAS, right now Things Aren't Funny Anymore, but we'll be Movin' On and If We're Not Back in Love by Monday, we can agree we all shared My Favorite Memory of Merle Haggard over Rainbow Stew, making us say It's Been a Great Afternoon; and

WHEREAS, Leonard in the Red Bandana in the Big City is asking, "Are the Good Times Really Over?"; and

WHEREAS, Just Between the Two of Us, we had A Friend in California who is now Out Among the Stars, up above Walking the Floor Over You, now himself a Twinkle, Twinkle Lucky Star enjoying Yesterday's Wine and a Natural High, and reminding us from Graceland to the Promised Land that Someday When Things Are Good, We'll Chase Each Other Around the Room, and When It Rains It Pours from above over the Amber Waves of Grain we'll all meet again on the never-ending Freedom Train.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. That even though he was born in California and known as an Okie from Muskogee, the State of Nebraska appreciates Merle Ronald Haggard's contributions to American culture and commends him for riding his freedom train to the Ralston Arena in February 2015.