

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 223

BY REPRESENTATIVE WALTERS

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the city of Shreveport to partner with certain enumerated entities to advance the Southern Soul City initiative.

WHEREAS, Shreveport has been unofficially dubbed the "Southern Soul Capitol" as part of an effort to bring recognition to the culturally rich music history of Northwest Louisiana and to bring more tourism to the region; and

WHEREAS, Southern Soul is an eclectic derivative of soul music that emerged in the Southern United States, blending elements of blues, rhythm and blues, gospel, and occasionally country and rock n' roll; and

WHEREAS, a resolution was filed during the 2026 Regular Session to designate Shreveport as the Southern Soul City; and

WHEREAS, this effort is more than honorary or symbolic, it is intentional with the specific goal of marketing this musical genre with the intent of generating revenue to strengthen the region; and

WHEREAS, Southern Soul is more than just music, it is an expression of life, culture, and dialect and soon to become an economic engine for the revitalization of Shreveport; and

WHEREAS, the Annual Shreveport Blues and Southern Soul Pre-Labor Day Fest celebrated its fourteenth year in 2025; and

WHEREAS, the festival highlights African-American culture, arts, and entrepreneurship, providing opportunities for businesses to thrive while also benefitting the community as a whole; and

WHEREAS, the festival is the sound of the city, attracting thousands of visitors and leading to increased spending on accommodations, dining, and entertainment, which creates jobs and supports local businesses; and

WHEREAS, the festival also highlights local restaurants which are the heart and soul of the community where people share time and conversation over meals prepared by local chefs who have that Southern Soul flair; and

WHEREAS, these restaurants are residual beneficiaries of what Southern Soul continues to bring to the city of Shreveport; and

WHEREAS, the continued growth of the festival has produced a corresponding increase in its economic impact on the city of Shreveport; and

WHEREAS, Shreveport intends to capitalize on this sustained growth through a Southern Soul initiative to enhance tourism, hospitality, entertainment, the small business ecosystem, and the Shreveport Regional Airport; and

WHEREAS, Southern Soul has also been the backdrop of athletic events like the Red River Classic, highlighting Historically Black Colleges and Universities athletic talent; and

WHEREAS, during these events, university bands are front and center drawing inspiration from the music to entertain and inspire; and

WHEREAS, music has been the soundtrack to many movements across the country and Southern Soul has become the soundtrack to Shreveport's movement toward sustained economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS, Shreveport has a bold vision to market the Southern Soul experience and welcome people from across the country to visit the city and celebrate its rich music culture while simultaneously providing an economic boost to the region; and

WHEREAS, through Southern Soul, the city of Shreveport plans to pursue the creation of a Southern Soul museum to recognize the worthy contributors to the genre; a Southern Soul Recording Academy to recognize excellence in the recording arts and to ensure that music remains an indelible part of our culture; an exhibit to be placed at the Shreveport Regional Airport to remind travelers that they are located in the city that originated Southern Soul; a Shreveport Street Walk of Fame to honor and celebrate the city's rich music history; downtown Southern Soul inspired murals to promote cultural expression and facilitate community engagement; and a local Southern Soul history month to raise awareness of the importance of this music genre's importance to the city, along with the establishment of a framework for city and parish incentives for the historic preservation of the arts.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the city of Shreveport to partner with certain enumerated entities to advance the Southern Soul City initiative.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the chair of the Southern Soul Foundation will partner with the city of Shreveport, the parish of Caddo, the Shreveport Regional Airport, the Shreve Memorial Library, the Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission, visit Shreveport-Bossier tourism, and the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism on these endeavors no later than October 2026, to create an annual phase system to ensure the success of the Southern Soul City initiatives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the president of the Southern Soul City Foundation, with assistance from the governing authority of the city of Shreveport, shall provide a written annual phase report to the commissioner of the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism by October first of 2026, 2027, and 2028, providing details on progress made on the Southern Soul City initiatives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the mayor of Shreveport, the chair of the board of directors of the Shreveport-Bossier African American Chamber of Commerce, the chairman of the board of directors of the Shreveport Regional Airport, the president of the board of control of the Shreve Memorial Library, the vice president of business development of the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau, the Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission, and the commissioner of the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES