Senate Resolution No. 528

BY: Senator HARCKHAM

COMMEMORATING the 125th Birthday of Aaron Copland on November 14, 2025

WHEREAS, From time to time, we take note of certain individuals whom we wish to recognize for their valued contributions and publicly acknowledge their endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among us all; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to join the people of this great Empire State in proudly observing the 125th birthday of Aaron Copland on November 14, 2025, taking note of his many accomplishments and contributions to American music and culture; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the year, Copland House will host a variety of events, including on-site concerts, to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the birth of its namesake, Aaron Copland; and

WHEREAS, Aaron Copland, one of the most celebrated American composers, is known for his distinctive blend of classical music with American folk traditions; his compositions are often seen as embodying the spirit of the United States in the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, Born on November 14, 1900, in Brooklyn, New York, Aaron Copland's early years were marked by exposure to a rich cultural environment; he studied music in New York City before going to France to study composition with Nadia Boulanger, whose guidance played a crucial role in shaping his distinctive style; and

WHEREAS, Aaron Copland's music evolved over time, incorporating elements from European modernism, jazz, and folk melodies; and

WHEREAS, The hallmark of Copland's music lies in his ability to create a sound that resonated deeply with the American experience; works like Appalachian Spring (1944), Fanfare for the Common Man (1942), and Rodeo (1942) have become iconic, evoking imagery of wide-open spaces, the pioneer spirit, and the triumph of everyday Americans; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, his use of simple, open harmonies and folk-like themes made his music accessible and deeply emotional, reflecting both the optimism and the struggles of the American landscape; and

WHEREAS, Aaron Copland's influence extended beyond the concert hall; during the 1930s and 1940s, he became deeply involved in the cultural fabric of American life; he composed music for ballet, film scores, and was instrumental in the American avant-garde movement; his Fanfare for the Common Man, for example, became a patriotic anthem, and his film scores, like those for Of Mice and Men (1939), further established him as a versatile composer with a profound understanding of American culture; and

WHEREAS, Today, Copland House, located in the scenic town of Cortlandt Manor, New York, is both a historic site and an ongoing center for music and culture; it was the home of Aaron Copland from 1960 until his death in 1990; the house, situated in the rolling hills of the Hudson River Valley, became a sanctuary for Copland, where he composed many of his later works and hosted fellow musicians, composers, and artists; and

WHEREAS, The house itself, designated a National Historic Landmark in 2008 by the United States Secretary of the Interior, is a modernist home that blends seamlessly into the natural landscape, reflecting Copland's appreciation for simplicity and open spaces, qualities that are mirrored in his music; his time at this house marked a period of significant creative output, and he often worked in the music studio built on the property, which is still preserved today; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of Aaron Copland's legacy, Copland House has been preserved and transformed into a cultural center dedicated to advancing the composer's artistic vision; it is home to the Copland House Residency Awards, which invites composers to live and work in the same environment that inspired Copland; these residencies provide composers with the opportunity to create new music while being immersed in the same creative atmosphere that Copland enjoyed; and

WHEREAS, Copland House also hosts a variety of events, including concerts by its Copland House Ensemble, lectures, and educational programs on site, throughout the nation, and abroad, aimed at fostering a deeper understanding of Aaron Copland's music and its significance; the house stands not only as a tribute to his life but also as a living testament to his enduring influence on contemporary music; and

WHEREAS, As part of his lasting legacy, Copland House serves as a hub for artistic inspiration and a gathering place for those who wish to explore and continue the work of one of America's most revered composers; and

WHEREAS, Aaron Copland's music remains a pillar of American classical composition, deeply embedded in both the cultural memory of the nation and the broader classical music world; his music celebrates the American ethos - hope, resilience, and freedom - while also standing as a testament to the power of music to shape and define national identity; and

WHEREAS, Even as tastes in music continue to evolve, Aaron Copland's compositions serve as a timeless reminder of the unique soundscape of America in the 20th century; as we celebrate his legacy, we are reminded of his unparalleled ability to express the soul of America through music, making his 125th birthday a significant moment of reflection on his contribution to the arts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 125th Birthday of Aaron Copland on November 14, 2025; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Copland House.