

BLACK MUSIC MONTH CELEBRATION BY NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATORS



The Black New York State Legislative Taskforce paid tribute to Black musicians and broadcast professionals in celebration of its second Annual Black Music Month. The celebration took place in Albany on May 27 and May 28, 2026. Led by Chair Senator Lea Webb and Vice Chair Assembly Member Stefani Zinerman, the Legislative Taskforce honored Black musicians and professionals by acknowledging their extraordinary influence and enduring legacy.

Our Black musicians represent the soul of our nation and capture our joy, sorrow, history, and spirit through jazz, rhythm and blues, hip hop, spirituals, and rock. They are the griots in our culture, and their music has uplifted Black people for centuries and has national and international reach. We ensure that the legacy of Black musicians is sustained by continuing to say their names and to celebrate them while they are present in our community spaces. The New York State Black Legislative Task Force are saying the names of our Black musicians and industry professionals.

Honorees of the Black New York State legislators included jazz saxophonist, bandleader, and composer John Coltrane who was represented by his daughter Michelle Coltrane; hip hop artist, writer, producer, lyricist, and activist Talib Kweli; DJ, Rock n Roll Hall of Fame Inductee, producer, and philanthropist MC Lyte; DJ, producer, philanthropist, and founder of Black Girls Rock Beverly Bond; Radio Talk Show Titan and Activist Bob Law, represented by his daughter Aisha Patrice Law; CEO and owner Shelia Brown from WUFO in Buffalo; and CEO Andre Langston from WDKX in Rochester, New York. Each Honoree received a resolution. Their

names, along with a resolution acknowledging Black Music Month will be inscribed in the annals of the New York State Legislative records.

Highlights of the Celebration

Senator Lea Webb emphasized the need to keep our music alive. She spoke on how Black music influences every genre that is felt and experienced in our state, in our country, and internationally. Many writers, producers, and performers have helped to shape the sound of Black music in this country; they are trailblazers in multiple spaces she said.

Assemblymember Stefani Zinerman spoke on how Black music inspires us and on the need to amplify the culture of Black music. She spoke of the importance of working in unity to ensure that people are educated and have a decent place to live and listen to music.

Honorees witnessed Senators' testimonies regarding the value of a resolution for Black Music Month that will become part of the legislative record.

Michelle Coltrane, an artist, spoke of continuing the legacy of her parents John and Alice Coltrane by developing special projects.

Andre Langston reminded us that Black radio stations have disappeared and that there are only two remaining Black owned radio stations in New York State. He issued a call to the community. "Black Radio, Black Music, We Need You."

Aisha Patrice Law, in the tradition of her father Bob Law, said "Know your history; Be involved in the community; Build future generations; Speak truth; and Protect each other."

DJ Beverly Bond reminded us of Black music's spiritual and artistic contribution to human civilization.

Talib Kweli reminded us that the movement for Black Liberation and the Movement for Black Lives will set all people freed. He talked about how Black folks have been the moral compass of the world.

Shelia Brown reminded us to protect our cultural institutions.

Resolutions on New York State's Role in the Advancement of Black Music

□ **Senate Resolution 2214:** Adopted on May 27, this legislation officially highlights New York's critical role in the advancement of Black music. Senator Cordell Cleare led floor proceedings in Albany with a [moving speech](#) detailing the impact of Harlem's rich musical history. [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)]

□ **Assembly Resolution 1477:** Spearheaded in the Assembly, this resolution honors the historical foundation laid by local Black artists across New York City and the wider state. [[1](#), [2](#)]

I had the honor of watching my son Talib Kweli receive an award for his role in writing, producing, and using his platform to promote socially conscious music and dialogue.

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