

SR-55, As Adopted by Senate, May 16, 2013

Senator Brandenburg offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 55.

A resolution to recognize the 150th birthday of Henry Ford.

Whereas, The 150th anniversary of the birth of Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company, is recognized for his pioneering and uniquely American spirit and innovation that put the world on wheels. He contributed to significant social and economic progress in the United States and many other nations, including the moving assembly line to create automobiles for the masses; doubling wages for his workers, which in turn helped create a middle class that continues to be the backbone of America today; and successfully implementing sustainable materials to build and power his vehicles from the earliest days of the automobile; and

Whereas, On July 30, 1863, Henry Ford was born in Wayne County, Michigan, in an area that later became Dearborn. He demonstrated early in his life a propensity for mechanical aptitude by repairing people's watches, learning to fix steam engines, and run mill operations; and

Whereas, Henry Ford focused on further innovations related to the internal combustion engine, including developing his own vehicle, the quadricycle, and founding the Detroit Automobile Company in 1899; and

Whereas, On June 16, 1903, then 39-year-old Henry Ford and 11 associates, armed with little cash, some tools, a few blueprints, and unbounded optimism, launched the Ford Motor Company in a small converted wagon factory on a spur of the Michigan Central Railroad in Detroit; and

Whereas, He led the development of the first commercial automobile in 1903--the original 8-horsepower, 2-cylinder Model A vehicle with a 2-speed transmission, 28-inch wheels with wooden spokes, and 3-inch tires; and

Whereas, Between 1903 and 1908, Henry Ford and his engineers developed numerous models named after the letters of the alphabet, with some of the models being only experimental and not available to the public; and

Whereas, On October 1, 1908, Henry Ford introduced the Model T (also known as the Tin Lizzie), which could be reconfigured by buyers to move cattle, haul freight, herd horses, and even mow lawns. Ford produced 10,660 Model T vehicles its first model year, an industry record; and

Whereas, Henry Ford led the development of the first moving assembly line in 1913, beginning a new era of industrial progress and growth; and

Whereas, Henry Ford established a new standard in 1914 by setting Ford's minimum wage at \$5 for an 8-hour workday, which replaced the prior \$2.34 wage for a 9-hour day, and helped develop a middle-class workforce that could afford to buy the products they made; and

Whereas, Henry Ford saw his automobiles as a way toward "opening the highways to all mankind" by exporting vehicles and operating or selling them in more than 30 countries, including China, Brazil, and much of Europe. He was an early proponent of using renewable materials such as soybeans in car parts and fostered employment policies that created opportunities for those with physical or mental challenges; and

Whereas, In 1914, Henry Ford, with an eye to simplicity, efficiency, and affordability, ordered that the Model T use black paint exclusively because it dried faster than other colors, allowing cars to be built daily at a lower cost, and Ford said the vehicle would be offered in "any color so long as it is black"; and

Whereas, The Rouge manufacturing complex allowed for the complete production of vehicles from raw materials processing to final assembly and was an icon of the 20th century; and

Whereas, On March 9, 1932, Henry Ford, in response to consumer demand for more power, pioneered the first Ford vehicle with a V-8 engine block cast in one piece; and

Whereas, While Ford offered only two automotive brands--Ford and Lincoln--through 1937, due to increased competition in 1938, Ford introduced the first Mercury. It was a car with a distinctive streamlined body style, a V-8 engine with more horsepower than a Ford, and hydraulic brakes, thus filling the void between the low-priced Ford and the high-priced Lincoln; and

Whereas, By government decree and with Henry Ford's full support, all civilian auto production in the United States ceased on February 10, 1942, and Ford, under the control of the War Production Board, produced an extensive array of tanks, B-24 aircraft, armored cars, amphibious craft, gliders, and other materials for the World War II war effort; and

Whereas, On April 7, 1947, Henry Ford passed away, and to this day, his legacy of innovation continues to drive Ford's commitment to a strong business, great products, and a better world; and

Whereas, In the 21st century, Ford continues its marvelous record for fine products with the best-selling car in the world, the Ford Focus, and the best-selling truck in the world, the Ford F-Series; and

Whereas, In its quest to make high-quality and innovative products, Ford has continually led the way with breakthrough technologies--achieving greater fuel efficiency for drivers of gas-powered and electrified vehicles; offering the latest safety features on more cars across the lineup; and providing new possibilities for in-car experiences with connected car technology; and

Whereas, Ford Motor Company now employs more than 65,000 Americans and supports millions more jobs in the United States through its supplier and dealer network; and

Whereas, William Clay Ford, Jr., the great-grandson of Henry Ford, as executive chairman of Ford Motor Company, has focused on the fundamentals that made Ford a world-class auto manufacturer to carry the company through the 21st century with even better products and innovations. With his Blueprint for Mobility, he advances Henry Ford's vision to address the transportation challenges of the future; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we hereby recognize the 150th anniversary of the birth of Henry Ford, founder of Ford Motor Company, for his pioneering and uniquely American spirit and innovation that put the world on wheels; and be it further

Resolved, That we recognize his contribution to significant social and economic progress in the United States and many other nations, including the moving assembly line to create automobiles for the masses; doubling wages for his workers, which in turn helped create a middle class that continues to be the backbone of America today; and successfully implementing sustainable materials to build and power his vehicles from the earliest days of the automobile; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate congratulates Ford Motor Company's workforce for continuing to bring Henry Ford's vision to life. We anticipate that the vision of Henry Ford and Ford Motor Company will continue to have an even greater impact in the future by providing innovative products that are affordable and environmentally sustainable and will enhance personal mobility for generations to come.