

STATE OF ILLINOIS

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, John Prine's legendary musical career spanned five decades of writing songs that captured the human experience of everyday Americans leading to him being recognized as one of his generation's most influential singer/songwriters; and,

WHEREAS, he was born in Maywood, Illinois on October 10, 1946 and began playing the guitar at age 14; and,

WHEREAS, Prine worked as a mailman following high school and again upon returning from serving two years with the U.S. Army in Germany; he wrote many of his early songs while walking his mail route; and,

WHEREAS, he attended classes at Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music and was an integral part of the city's folk revival scene in the late 1960s; and,

WHEREAS, in 1970 while playing at The Fifth Peg club, Prine received a fortuitous review by then Chicago Sun Times film critic Roger Ebert headlined 'Singing Mailman Delivers a Powerful Message in a Few Words;' this was his first publicity and it launched him onto the Chicago folk music scene; and,

WHEREAS, John Prine's self-titled debut album was released in 1971 and included some of his most well-known songs including "Illegal Smile," "Hello in There," "Sam Stone," "Paradise," and "Angel from Montgomery;" the album was named on Rolling Stone magazine's list of 500 Greatest Albums of All Time (#452); and,

WHEREAS, his work has been recorded by artists such as Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson, and Bonnie Raitt and influenced the likes of Bob Dylan, Norah Jones, and Roger Waters; recently he was a mentor to a new generation of artists including Jason Isbell, Brandi Carlile, Sturgill Simpson, Dan Auerbach, and Kacey Musgraves; and,

WHEREAS, throughout his career Prine released 18 studio albums, won two Grammy Awards (11 nominations), was named Artist of the Year three times by the Americana Music Honors & Awards, received the 2020 Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, and was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame, among many other accolades; and,

WHEREAS, in 2005 he was the first singer-songwriter to read and perform at the Library of Congress by invitation of U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser. Kooser spoke of Prine as a "truly original writer, unequalled, and a genuine poet of the American people" and that "he did a better job of holding up the mirror of art to the '60s and '70s than any of our official literary poets;" and,

WHEREAS, on April 7, 2020, John Prine danced off life's stage at the age of 73 from complications related to COVID-19; and,

WHEREAS, he leaves behind an unparalleled musical legacy and was beloved by family and millions of fans who hope that in Heaven he finds Paradise waitin' just as he longed for;

THEREFORE, I, JB Pritzker, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby bestow upon John Prine the designation of **Honorary Poet Laureate** to honor and celebrate his lifetime of contributions as a writer and poet.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.

Done at the Capitol in the City of Springfield,
this THIRTIETH *day of* JUNE, *in*
the Year of Our Lord, two thousand and
TWENTY, *and of the State of Illinois,*
two hundred and SECOND.



Deese Whitt
SECRETARY OF STATE

JB Pritzker
GOVERNOR