

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 931 (Grove and Laird)
As Amended August 28, 2026
2/3 vote. Urgency

SUMMARY

This bill would require the Governor to annually proclaim September 25 as Dolly Parton Day.

Major Provisions

1) Requires the Governor to annually proclaim September 25 as Dolly Parton Day.

2) States the Legislature hereby finds and declares the following:

- a) International philanthropist, musician, and icon Dolly Parton dedicated her life to uplifting communities, promoting early literacy, and fostering a love of reading, learning, and music worldwide.
- b) Dolly Parton lived a life of strong personal faith and displayed her beliefs through love, forgiveness, and compassion for others. She approached life with optimism, responsibility, and a humbleness that inspired millions of people.
- c) Beyond Dolly Parton's legendary creative career, she was a fierce advocate for equality and a beloved ally to the LGBTQ+ community, exemplifying a lifelong dedication to human dignity, acceptance, and inclusion for all people.
- d) Dolly Parton also had a deep connection to the African American community. She earned an estimated \$10,000,000 from Whitney Houston's legendary 1992 cover song, "I Will Always Love You," but chose to invest that wealth directly back into a historically black neighborhood in the City of Nashville, Tennessee.
- e) In 1995, Dolly Parton established the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, which initially gifted books to children in the County of Sevier, Tennessee, where Dolly grew up. The program quickly expanded to provide books to children around the world. Since its inception, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has mailed millions of free books directly to children from birth to five years of age, regardless of family income.
- f) Recognizing the transformative impact of early literacy, the California State Legislature enacted landmark bipartisan legislation, Senate Bill 1183 of the 2021–22 Regular Session, jointly authored by Senator Shannon Grove, then-President pro Tempore of the Senate Toni G. Atkins, and others, to partner with the Dollywood Foundation to establish the Statewide Imagination Library Program in California.
- g) Through the joint leadership of Senator Shannon Grove and then-President pro Tempore of the Senate Toni G. Atkins, and in conjunction with state budget investments securing over \$68,000,000 in funding, California expanded the Statewide Imagination Library

Program across all 58 counties. That historic effort also made California the first state in the nation to offer a fully bilingual English-Spanish book selection, opening access to the program to approximately 2,400,000 young children statewide.

- h) It is fitting and proper for the State of California to recognize Dolly Parton's profound contributions to global literacy, humanitarianism, and the children of California by officially designating September 25 as Dolly Parton Day.

3) Contains an urgency clause.

COMMENTS

According to information provided by the author's office, the purpose of SB 931 is to officially establish September 25th annually as "Dolly Parton Day" in California. The bill pays tribute to the late entertainer, global icon, and philanthropist following her recent passing, honoring her extraordinary contributions to early childhood literacy, music, and humanitarianism.

Establishing September 25 as a date inspired by her iconic anthem, "9 to 5," provides a dedicated opportunity each year to celebrate her humanitarian work, raise public awareness of early childhood literacy initiatives, and encourage families across California to enroll in the free book-gifting program.

While California successfully partnered with the Dollywood Foundation through landmark bipartisan legislation (SB 1183, co-authored by Senator Shannon Grove and then-Senate President pro Tem Toni Atkins) to establish the Statewide Imagination Library Program, there is currently no official statewide day dedicated to honoring Dolly Parton's legacy and her profound impact on early literacy.

Background on a true American icon. Dolly Parton (1946–2026) was an American singer-songwriter, entrepreneur, and philanthropist whose career spanned more than five decades. Born the fourth of twelve children in Sevier County, Tennessee, she grew up in a low-income Appalachian community, an experience that shaped her longstanding commitment to educational access, child welfare, and economic mobility.

Her music career stands among the most commercially successful and culturally influential in American history. She wrote more than 3,000 songs, including "Jolene," "Coat of Many Colors," "I Will Always Love You," "Here You Come Again," and "9 to 5." With over 100 million records sold worldwide, she ranks among the best-selling music artists of all time. Her music frequently explored themes of poverty, family resilience, and rural identity, drawing on her own experiences to give voice to the challenges and aspirations of working-class Appalachian communities.

She received numerous awards and honors throughout her career. Among her many achievements are thirteen Academy of Country Music Awards, ten Grammy Awards, and nine Country Music Association Awards. She was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, the Country Music Hall of Fame, and the Songwriters Hall of Fame. In 2011, the Recording Academy honored her with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Parton starred in popular films such as *9 to 5* (1980) and *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (1982), both of which earned her Golden Globe nominations. Her performance in the 1989 film *Steel Magnolias* also received major critical recognition. She produced and starred in the Netflix film *Christmas on the Square* (2020), for which she won a Primetime Emmy Award. On Broadway, she wrote the music and lyrics for the musical *9 to 5* (2009), earning a Tony Award nomination for Best Original Score. Her life and career will be depicted in *Dolly: A True Original Musical*, which is heading to Broadway later this year.

She was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2000 and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2001. Her numerous honors also include the Library of Congress Living Legend Medal (2004), the National Medal of Arts (2005), Kennedy Center Honors (2006), and the Recording Academy's Lifetime Achievement Award (2011).

Her extensive philanthropic work produced monumental impacts. Her Imagination Library, launched in 1995, provides free books to children from birth to age five and now operates in all 50 states and several countries. The program has distributed more than 200 million books. Several states have enacted legislation or entered public-private partnerships to expand Imagination Library statewide, citing improvements in kindergarten readiness and early reading benchmarks.

She also engaged in public health and emergency response efforts, most notably contributing \$1 million to Vanderbilt University Medical Center for COVID-19 vaccine research in 2020.

Her business ventures—including Dollywood, Dollywood's DreamMore Resort, and related hospitality enterprises—created thousands of jobs in eastern Tennessee. These operations have contributed to regional tourism, workforce training, and infrastructure demands. Her companies implemented employer-funded education programs that align with state workforce development priorities, including tuition support for employees pursuing higher education.

Dolly Parton passed away on August 25, 2026, at the age of 80, prompting a worldwide outpouring of recognition for her enduring contributions to society and the lasting impact of her legacy.

According to the Author

According to the authors of this measure, "SB 931 designates September 25th as Dolly Parton Day in California to honor a true American treasure whose faith, music, generosity, and unmistakable spirit touched generations around the world. Dolly was a great unifier with a remarkable ability to bring people together across all walks of life. I was incredibly honored to work alongside former Senate President pro Tem Toni Atkins to bring Dolly's Imagination Library statewide in California, helping put books directly into the hands of children across our state and inspiring a lifelong love of reading. Throughout her life, Dolly gave so much of herself to others—from supporting children's hospitals and medical research to scholarships and literacy programs, she never stopped helping those in need. Most importantly, Dolly was a woman of deep faith who openly shared her love of Jesus, and while we mourn her passing, she leaves behind an extraordinary legacy of faith, generosity, music, and joy that will continue to inspire generations to come."

Arguments in Support

None on file.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

This bill is keyed non-fiscal by Legislative Counsel.

VOTES

SENATE FLOOR: Vote not relevant.

YES:

NO:

ABS, ABST OR NV:

ASM UTILITIES AND ENERGY: Vote not relevant

YES:

NO:

ABS, ABST OR NV:

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: Vote not relevant

YES:

NO:

ABS, ABST OR NV:

ASM GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION: 22-0-0

YES: Blanca Rubio, Davies, Alvarez, Berman, Bryan, Carrillo, Chen, Dixon, Fong, Gabriel, Gipson, Macedo, McKinnor, Nguyen, Pacheco, Ramos, Michelle Rodriguez, Solache, Soria, Ta, Valencia, Wallis

UPDATED

VERSION: August 28, 2026

CONSULTANT: Eric Johnson / G.O. / (916) 319-2531

FN: 0004521