

Rise Up with Syncopated Ladies

Music by Andra Day

INTRODUCTION

The following video, *Rise Up*, is inspired by Andra Day's song of the same name. The Ladies were inspired to create a dance that focused on Women's Rights and getting all people out to vote. Interspersed throughout the song are inspiring quotes from various strong female voices. Through movement, the tap dance you will see the Ladies perform illustrates the words and feelings of the song. The dancers in this video are Chloe Arnold, Maud Arnold, Anissa Lee, Assata Madison, and Orialis Ashley. See here where Chloe and Maud explain their inspirations and creative process for this video: https://youtu.be/4Kv_OsGdBSM

Watch their performance here: <https://youtu.be/Q05mGqiobl0>

The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees all American women the right to vote. It was passed by Congress on June 4, 1919 and ratified on August 18, 1920.

FirstWorks celebrates the 101st anniversary of the Amendment with an Instagram Live performance workshop by the Syncopated Ladies:

Thursday, June 4, 1:00pm

<https://www.instagram.com/firstworksri/>

SUPPLY LIST:

1. Tap shoes or sneakers if you do not have tap shoes
2. Portable tap floor, or, a hard floor surface such as linoleum. Try to avoid asphalt and concrete so that you do not put too much pressure on your knees and ankles.
3. Water bottle filled with water to stay hydrated
4. Small towel to wipe your face
5. Eagerness to learn and have fun!
6. Your Smile 😊

Whether you actively participate, or simply watch, we guarantee a moving and inspiring experience!

BIOGRAPHY

Syncopated Ladies is a Female Tap Dance Band widely known for their viral videos and founded by Emmy Nominated Choreographer, Chloe Arnold. Chloe was discovered at a young age in Washington, DC by Debbie Allen, and her choreography has been featured on hit television shows such as *So You Think You Can Dance*, *Good Morning America*, *The Ellen Show*, *The Talk*, and over 30 episodes of *The Late Late Show* with James Corden. As part of the FirstWorks *Raise Your Voice* initiative, the Ladies performed at PVDfest 2019 and conducted a tap dance assembly for students at the Mary E. Fogarty Elementary School in Providence.



NOTE TO EDUCATORS: FirstWorks Education will make every effort to connect appropriate supporting curricula to the arts presentations provided. However, your professional expertise, rapport with your students, and knowledge of their capabilities will make these lessons resonate.

We welcome your feedback: Did you use the lessons? How did it go? Did you not use them? If not, why? Or, did you vary them? Please let us know. We are here to help. We'd also be delighted to see any resulting creations!

Please contact Kathleen McAreavey, Education & Community Outreach Manager at:

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BIOGRAPHIES



Andra Day, born Cassandra Monique Batie, is a singer, songwriter and actress. Growing up in San Diego, she began singing at her church and also started dance lessons at age 5; subsequently graduating from the San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts. She has performed with Stevie Wonder, who is credited with “discovering” her.

Her debut album, *Cheers to the Fall*, was released in 2015 with a tour the following year. The album peaked at number 48 on the Billboard 200 chart. At the 2016 Grammy Awards, it was nominated for Best R&B Album and the album’s main single, *Rise Up*, was nominated for Best R&B Performance. Its power as a freedom song recalls those embraced during the Civil Rights Movement. She performed the song at the White House in 2015 and at the 2016 Democratic National Convention. Day has also performed at the Newport Jazz Festival in both 2017 and 2018. A social activist, she sang on the Academy Award nominated song *Stand Up For Something* with Common and opened the 2018 March For Our Lives rally by singing with the Baltimore Children’s Choir. Day has said that the song was never written as an anthem, even though it has been embraced widely by activist communities. She explained its meaning by stating, “‘Rise Up’ is saying one piece isn’t better than the other—when this part is struggling, I’m gonna help you. ‘Rise Up’ is telling you we are all equal.”

National Tap Dance Day falls on May 25th every year and is a celebration of tap dance as an American art form. The idea of National Tap Dance Day was first presented to U.S. Congress on February 7, 1989 and was signed into law by President George H.W. Bush on November 8, 1989.

The date is significant in that it is the birthdate of Bill “Bojangles” Robinson (1878-1949), the famous and beloved tap dancer from the first half of the twentieth century. His upright style of dancing, with light and exacting footwork, brought tap “up on its toes” from an earlier flat-footed shuffling style.

National Tap Dance Day has become an international day of note as it is also celebrated in other countries, including Japan, Australia, India, Iceland, Germany, France, Brazil, Estonia, and, undoubtedly, among many others.

Broadway legend **Bill “Bojangles” Robinson** was born Luther Robinson in Richmond, Virginia, on May 25, 1878. He started his career as a vaudeville performer, transitioning to Broadway and to Hollywood films in the 1930s and 1940s. His delicate tap dance style and cheerful demeanor made Robinson a favorite of audiences of all races. He died in New York City on November 25, 1949.



SOME BACKGROUND ON TAP:

Tracing the history of tap dance puts into focus issues of race and ethnicity; and inevitably takes on the painful history of race, racism, and race relations in America.

Tap dance originated in the United States in the early 19th century at the crossroads of African and Irish American dance forms. When slave owners took away traditional African percussion instruments, slaves turned to percussive dancing to express themselves and retain their cultural identities. This dancing was also used for communication and community building that could eventually lead to revolution, which made it a subversive act of resistance. These styles of dance connected with clog dancing from the British Isles, creating a unique form of movement and rhythm.

Tap gained popularity after the Civil War as a part of traveling minstrel shows, which used damaging caricatures of black people for humor. Tap was also an important feature of popular Vaudeville variety shows of the early 20th century, and a major part of the rich creative output of the Harlem Renaissance. It became a central aspect of Hollywood and Broadway productions until World War II. After waning in popularity in the latter half of the 1900s, tap has experienced a resurgence on concert stages, resurfacing with it a complicated history of cultural exchange, imitation, and theft.

*"You wonder, why did tap dance come out of slavery? When did people have time to dance? But like our brilliant young man in the back said, "tap dance generates love", when you dance you feel free and when you dance you control your own body. If you have to be somebody's slave and you don't have control over when you wake up, what work you have to do, but you have maybe have a little bit of time every day to express yourself through the arts, you're going to take hold of that and really go for it. So tap dance comes out of a need to express yourself and to feel free. **So it is an American art form, more specifically an African American art form, but what's amazing is that you can be from anywhere, look like anything, be a boy or a girl, and do it.**"*

- Maud Arnold, Producer and Dancer of Syncopated Ladies, spoken during school matinee performance at Mary E. Fogarty Elementary School, Providence, June 2019

Additional resources on the history of tap:

What the Eye Hears: A History of Tap Dancing by Brian Seibert

Tap Dancing America: A Cultural History by Constance Valis Hill

Savion!: My Life in Tap by Savion Glover



Considered two of the greatest tap dancers ever, the Nicholas Brothers, Harold at left, and Fayard at right, in a still image from their famous staircase performance at the conclusion of the film, "Stormy Weather". Don't try this at home! But, do look them up online to see videos of their amazing acrobatic and gymnastic inspired tap dance routines.

Self-taught from watching vaudeville acts as children, they also studied with the great ballet master George Balanchine. Their careers lasted close to 70 years, garnering praise and awards along the way. They also taught Master Classes. One of their students was Debbie Allen, who taught Chloe Arnold, who now teaches you!

Image courtesy of 20th Century Fox.

RESOURCES

Still I Rise

Poem by Maya Angelou

*You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.*

*Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.*

*Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.*

*Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?*

*Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.*

*You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.*

*Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?*

*Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.*

*Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.*

Maya Angelou, "Still I Rise" from *And Still I Rise: A Book of Poems*. Copyright © 1978 by Maya Angelou. Used by permission of Random House, an imprint and division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

Sources: *The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou* (1994)

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46446/still-i-rise>

Rise Up

Song lyrics by Andra Day

You're broken down and tired
Of living life on a merry-go-round
And you can't find the fighter
But I see it in you so we gonna walk it out
Move mountains
We gonna walk it out
And move mountains

And I'll rise up
I'll rise like the day
I'll rise up
I'll rise unafraid
I'll rise up
And I'll do it a thousand times again
And I'll rise up
High like the waves
I'll rise up
In spite of the ache
I'll rise up
And I'll do it a thousand times again
For you
For you
For you
For you

When the silence isn't quiet
And it feels like it's getting hard to breathe
And I know you feel like dying
But I promise we'll take the world to its feet
Move mountains
Bring it to its feet
Move mountains
And I'll rise up
I'll rise like the day
I'll rise up

And I'll do it a thousand times again
For you
For you
For you
For you
All we need all we need is hop
And for that we have each other
And for that we have each other
And we will rise
We will rise
We'll rise
We'll rise

I'll rise up
Rise like the day
I'll rise up
In spite of the ache
I will rise a thousand times again
And we'll rise up
High like the waves
We'll rise up
In spite of the ache
We'll rise up
And we'll do it a thousand times again
For you
For you
For you
For you

Remember the Ladies

In a letter dated March 31, 1776, Abigail Adams writes to her husband, John Adams, urging him and the other members of the Continental Congress not to forget about the nation's women when fighting for America's independence from Great Britain:

I long to hear that you have declared an independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.

Unfortunately, John Adams felt that no good could come from allowing more Americans to vote. He said in part, that if the qualifications to vote were expanded:

... new claims will arise, women will demand the vote; lads from 12 to 21 will think their rights not enough attended to; and every man who has not a farthing will demand an equal voice with any other, in all acts of state. It tends to confound and destroy all distinctions and prostrate all ranks to one common level.

Abigail Adams' letter was a private first step in the fight for equal rights for women, but, it would be almost 150 years before that hope would be realized.



Oil Paintings, at left, Abigail Adams by Gilbert Stuart, in the collection of the National Gallery of Art; at right, John Adams, unidentified artist, after Gilbert Stuart, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.
Image courtesy of Smithsonian Magazine.

History of Women's Suffrage in Rhode Island

©Rhode Island Historical Society Manuscripts Division

<https://www.rihs.org/mssinv/mss021.htm>

For decades prior to the passage of women's suffrage in 1920, there was much agitation and activity in local and national suffrage organizations. In Rhode Island, one of the original state suffrage organizations was formed on December 11, 1868. This organization, the Rhode Island Women's Suffrage Association, was organized upon the return of two Rhode Island women, Paulina Wright Davis and Elizabeth Buffam Chace, from the organizational meeting of the New England Women's Suffrage Association which was held in Boston, Massachusetts on October 23, 1868. Only a year later, the Rhode Island Women's Suffrage Association would host the national convention of the National Women's Suffrage Association in Newport, Rhode Island.

The Rhode Island Women's Suffrage Association was the sole organizing force working for women's suffrage in Rhode Island for over forty years. Soon after its formation as an official organization, the Rhode Island Women's Suffrage Association petitioned the Rhode Island legislature to submit a constitutional amendment to enfranchise women. Each year after that, the organization continued its requests to the state legislature until the bill was favorably acted upon by the Rhode Island legislature of 1886-1887. When the state suffrage amendment was submitted to the male voters of Rhode Island, however, it was defeated on April 6, 1887. Until its eventual passage by the United States Congress, a bill guaranteeing women's suffrage by constitutional amendment was presented to Rhode Island legislature each year after 1882 without success.

In December of 1907, the College Equal Suffrage League was organized in Rhode Island to further educate citizens about the issue of the vote for women. A few years later, the Rhode Island Women's Suffrage Party was formed when, in 1913, the political methods of state organization as introduced in New York State by Carrie Chapman Catt, then President of the National Women's Suffrage Association, were adopted in Rhode Island. Two years later, members of the Rhode Island Women's Suffrage Association and the College Equal Suffrage League joined their members with the Rhode Island Women's Suffrage Party to unite for legislative work. At the time, in 1915, the groups took the name Rhode Island Equal Suffrage Association and coalesced into a single organization.

As was often true of the membership of other women's organizations during this time period, the officers and members of the Rhode Island suffrage organization worked in many other moral and social reform areas in addition to that of women's suffrage. These concerns included agitation for increased educational opportunities for women, improved child (and female) labor legislation, better immigration laws, and work for liquor prohibition in the temperance movement.

Creation of a national League of Women Voters was proposed for the first time in 1919; a year before the passage of the 19th Amendment legalized the vote for women. The proposal was made at the national convention of the National American Women's Suffrage Association in St. Louis, Missouri, by President Carrie Chapman Catt. This proposal for a national League of Women Voters as a department of the National American Women's Suffrage Association reflected the major concern of the convention delegates -- the direction of their organization after the passage of the 19th Amendment. In the proposal for the creation of a League of Women's Voters, President Catt called for a "living Memorial" to the leaders of the fight for women's suffrage. In February of 1920, the League of Women Voters was formally created as a national organization in Chicago, Illinois.

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island, originally known as the United League of Women Voters, was organized in Rhode Island on October 8, 1920. Like many of its sister League chapters in other states, the Rhode Island League grew out of its predecessor suffrage organization, the Rhode Island Equal Suffrage Association. During its first year, the primary concern of the League of Voters was twofold; to unite all of the state suffrage members for continued work in the political process and to recruit new members to the organization. By the end of its first year, the League numbered over one thousand members statewide. During its second year of existence, the League of Women Voters of Rhode Island encouraged and supported the formation of local units or chapters throughout the state. These local chapters were considered the backbone of the state chapter and were urged to conduct their own studies of local issues and to take local action, while still remaining under the umbrella of the state League. The state organization of the League of Women Voters still reflects this initial structure; to serve as a go-between for the national and local chapters as well as bringing all of the local concerns together on a state level.

The major efforts of the national and state Leagues were originally to register women to vote and to help educate female voters in the political process. Since 1920, however, the overall scope of both the national and state Leagues have broadened to incorporate international issues and the education of all United States citizens. Throughout its sixty years of existence, the League of Women Voters has, thus far, remained an active and influential participant in local, state and national issues and concerns. Describing itself as a non-partisan and educational organization, the League has dedicated its efforts to the goal of increasing and improving citizen participation in government at all levels. Included among the many concerns and accomplishments of the League are legislative work to improve the status of women and the welfare of children; support of the Sheppard-Towner Act for public protection of maternity and infancy, which became law in 1921; work for enactment of a Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act in 1938; support of the Reorganization Act of 1946, which helped streamline Congressional procedures; support for United States' participation in the United Nations; work for anti-discrimination laws in housing and development, and improvement in state labor laws and state fair employment practices; support for anti-poverty measures and civil rights legislation; work towards improvement and financing of public education; and support for progressive public assistance programs and the Social Security Act of 1935.

In addition to these many concerns, the League in Rhode Island has supported many strictly local issues. These state issues have included reforms in the Rhode Island judicial system, including support for creation of a separate Juvenile Court; support for changes in state tax laws and allocations; support for a Direct Primary (election) Bill, which provided for party election of candidates by popular vote rather than by party machine; and support for the Home Rule Bill, which allowed local communities control over their own strictly local affairs. The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island, then, has been concerned with a wide spectrum of issues on both the local and national levels, ranging from state aid to families and educational legislation to international issues on foreign relations and world trade.

Current information about the Rhode Island League of Women Voters can be found here: <http://www.lwvri.org/index.html>

How to register to vote in Rhode Island: <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Home/RegistertoVote?ActiveFlag=1>

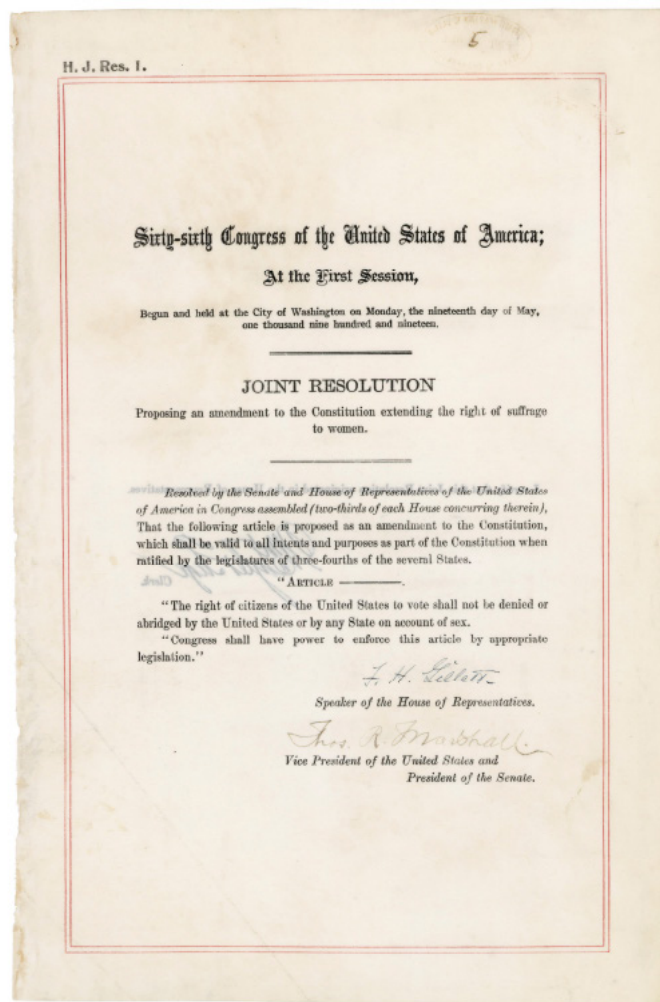
19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Womens Right to Vote (1920)

The 19th amendment guarantees all American women the right to vote. Achieving this milestone required a lengthy and difficult struggle; victory took decades of agitation and protest. Beginning in the mid-19th century, several generations of woman suffrage supporters lectured, wrote, marched, lobbied, and practiced civil disobedience to achieve what many Americans considered a radical change of the Constitution. Few early supporters lived to see final victory in 1920.

Beginning in the 1800s, women organized, petitioned, and picketed to win the right to vote, but it took them decades to accomplish their purpose. Between 1878, when the amendment was first introduced in Congress, and August 18, 1920, when it was ratified, champions of voting rights for women worked tirelessly, but strategies for achieving their goal varied. Some pursued a strategy of passing suffrage acts in each state—nine western states adopted woman suffrage legislation by 1912. Others challenged male-only voting laws in the courts. Militant suffragists used tactics such as parades, silent vigils, and hunger strikes. Often supporters met fierce resistance. Opponents heckled, jailed, and sometimes physically abused them.

By 1916, almost all of the major suffrage organizations were united behind the goal of a constitutional amendment. When New York adopted woman suffrage in 1917 and President Wilson changed his position to support an amendment in 1918, the political balance began to shift.

On May 21, 1919, the House of Representatives passed the amendment, and 2 weeks later, the Senate followed. When Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the amendment on August 18, 1920, the amendment passed its final hurdle of obtaining the agreement of three-fourths of the states. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby certified the ratification on August 26, 1920, changing the face of the American electorate forever. (National Archives)



19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Women's Right to Vote (1920).
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Photograph, "Bastille Day spells prison for sixteen suffragettes who picketed the White House" July 19, 1917. The National Women's Party (NWP) organized the first White House picket in U.S. history in January 1917. It lasted nearly three years. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Dese a la Mujer de California

El Derecho de Votar

VOTOS PARA LA MUJER

POR QUE

PORQUE, la mujer debe obedecer la ley como el hombre,
Debe votar como el hombre.

PORQUE, la mujer paga contribuciones como el hombre, sosteniendo así
el gobierno,
Debe votar como el hombre.

PORQUE, la mujer sufre por mal gobierno como el hombre,
Debe votar como el hombre.

PORQUE, las madres quieren mejorar las condiciones de sus hijos,
Debe votar como el hombre.

PORQUE, mas de 6,000,000 de mujeres en los Estados Unidos trabajan, y
su salud así como la de nuestros futuros ciudadanos esta con
frecuencia en peligro con motivo de las malas condiciones de los
talleres, que solo pueden ser remediadas por medio de la legis-
latura,
Debe votar como el hombre.

PORQUE, la mujer acomodada que trata de ayudar al bienestar del
publico, podría sostener su opinión por medio de su voto,
Debe votar como el hombre.

PORQUE, la hacendosa ama de casa y la mujer de profesion no pueden dar
ese servicio al público y solo pueden servir al Estado por el mismo
método usado por los hombres de negocios, es decir, por medio
del voto,
Debe votar como el hombre.

PORQUE, la mujer necesita ser educada á mayor altura acerca de su re-
sponsabilidad en el sentido social y cívico y éste solo se desarrolla
con el uso,
Debe votar como el hombre.

PORQUE, la mujer es consumidora y los consumidores necesitan absoluta
representacion en política,
Debe votar como el hombre.

PORQUE, las mujeres ciudadanas de un gobierno formado del pueblo,
elejido POR el pueblo y PARA el pueblo,
Debe votar como el hombre.

LA MUJER lo necesita.

EL HOMBRE lo necesita.

EL ESTADO lo necesita.

¿POR QUE ?

La mujer debe dar su ayuda.

El Hombre debe dar su ayuda.

El Estado debe usar su ayuda.

PORQUE

This pamphlet, by the Los Angeles Political Equality League, makes the case for woman suffrage in Spanish. In the successful 1911 campaign, suffrage organizations, which were often led by and centered on the concerns of Anglo women, made efforts to gain the support of the Latinx community. Courtesy of Women's Suffrage and Equal Rights Collection, Ella Strong Denison Library, Scripps College, Claremont, CA.

Enrolled Bill -- National Tap Dance Day

--H.J.Res.131--

H.J.Res.131

One Hundred First Congress of the United States of America

AT THE FIRST SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday, the third day of January,
one thousand nine hundred and eighty-nine

Joint Resolution

To designate May 25, 1989, as 'National Tap Dance Day'.

Whereas the multifaceted art form of tap dancing is a manifestation of the cultural heritage of our Nation, reflecting the fusion of African and European cultures into an exemplification of the American spirit, that should be, through documentation, and archival and performance support, transmitted to succeeding generations;

Whereas tap dancing has had a historic and continuing influence on other genres of American art, including music, vaudeville, Broadway musical theater, and film, as well as other dance forms;

Whereas tap dancing is perceived by the world as a uniquely American art form;

Whereas tap dancing is a joyful and powerful aesthetic force providing a source of enjoyment and an outlet for creativity and self-expression for Americans on both the professional and amateur level;

Whereas it is in the best interest of the people of our Nation to preserve, promote, and celebrate this uniquely American art form;

Whereas Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson made an outstanding contribution to the art of tap dancing on both stage and film through the unification of diverse stylistic and racial elements; and

Whereas May 25, as the anniversary of the birth of Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson, is an appropriate day on which to refocus the attention of the Nation on American tap dancing: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That May 25, 1989, is designated 'National Tap Dance Day'. The President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such a day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Vice President of the United States and

President of the Senate.