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Reps. Jeffries, Johnson, Underwood and Waters Share Insights and Memories About Black Music in Series of Conversations

Leading Members of Congress and Black music executives discuss the importance of Black Music Month and Black music to culture, politics and society

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 29, 2021) — Since Black Music Appreciation Month was first formally established in 1979, it has been an opportunity to elevate Black voices and celebrate Black music, recognizing their enduring impact on the cultural fabric of society. To honor that legacy, the Digital Media Association (DiMA) convened a series of enlightening and personal conversations featuring leading Members of Congress and Black executives from streaming music services to discuss “Black Music & Leadership in Politics & Entertainment.”

With lessons and insights on the role Black music plays in our lives, culture and politics, these 10–15-minute conversations provide a valuable dialogue on the importance of recognizing and amplifying Black voices. The complete collection of conversations can be found [here](#).

A few excerpts:

[Rep. Lauren Underwood \(D-Ill.\)](#) on why it's important to celebrate Black Music Month: “Because we make culture and Black music has been the foundation of American music: jazz, rock n roll, hip-hop ... We have to lift up those folks who were pioneers, who were brilliant...and recognize their contributions and successes.”

[Rep. Hakeem Jeffries \(D-N.Y.\)](#) on what makes Black music so popular: “the music really communicated a culture. And I think that and a journey, and a life experience, and the trials and tribulations, and the adversity of it and then conveyed it in a very poetic way. Sometimes inspiring, sometimes troubling, sometimes introspective, at all times rhythmic.”

[Rep. Hank Johnson \(D-Ga.\)](#) on how acceptance of Black music has evolved: “A lot of those Ray Charles album covers wouldn't show Ray Charles because he was Black. But if you could keep it away from people that it was coming from a Black person then it would sell. So we've had those kinds of challenges that we have overcome, and now our music is celebrated openly and emulated and mimicked by all, and then it becomes part of the common culture.”

Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Cal.) on the success of Black musicians as entrepreneurs: “I knew it would evolve. It was going to be a staple in the music world. As I looked at Queen Latifah and Mary J Blige, where they started, and what they were doing, and how they have become producers and directors and businesspeople and still have had some of the greatest music out there. I was right about that. The jobs that have been created and the opportunities that have been opened up.”

Inspired by these conversations, DiMA has also curated a Black Music Month playlist that includes favorite artists and songs discussed and inspired by each Member of Congress. Listen here: <http://hyperurl.co/y7zxp6>

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About The Digital Media Association (DiMA)

DiMA is the leading organization advocating for the digital music innovations that have created unparalleled consumer choice and revolutionized the way music fans and artists connect. Representing the world's leading music streaming companies – Amazon Music, Apple Music, Google/YouTube, Pandora and Spotify – DiMA's mission is to promote and protect the ability of music fans to engage with creative content whenever and wherever they want and for artists to more easily reach old fans and make new ones. www.DiMA.org