



City of Madison

Legislative File Number 22458 (version 1)

Title

Honoring the life of Bennett "Ben" Masel, his contributions to our community and declaring April 20th as "Ben Masel Day" in the City of Madison.

Body

WHEREAS, Bennett "Ben" Masel was a fierce defender of personal and civil liberty, a champion of the Constitution, the rule of law and the founding faith that the freedoms outlined in the Bill of Rights were not just ideals, they were practical tools to be used on a daily basis to challenge power; and

WHEREAS, Ben Masel peacefully fought for his rights with courage, cleverness, and joy; and

WHEREAS, Ben Masel participated actively in our democracy, running for public office in Wisconsin at the county, state and federal levels starting with his run against Tommy Thompson in 1990 in the Republican primary for Governor and used the campaign to re-introduce hemp as a raw material for such industries as textiles, as a fuel source and, especially of interest to Wisconsin, paper; and

WHEREAS, Ben Masel advocated for intelligent drug policy, opposed the Drug War and supported the legalization of medicinal marijuana and marijuana possession in the State of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, Ben Masel created Weedstock, an annual celebration of cannabis held every Memorial Day in various Wisconsin locales, and The Great Midwest Marijuana Harvest Festival; and

WHEREAS, Ben Masel served as vice-president of the Wisconsin state chapter of NORML for the last decade and was the state director during the late 1980s and early 90s; and

WHEREAS, even during his illness, Ben Masel could be found at the State Capitol, opposing Governor Scott Walker's budget and exercising his constitutional rights for free assembly holding a sign that read: "This is a Test of the Emergency Free Speech System"; and

WHEREAS, Ben was the very proud father of Semilla Anderson and grandfather of his beloved granddaughter Anandi;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Madison does hereby honor the life of Bennett "Ben" Masel and his contribution to our community.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the City of Madison hereby declares that April 20th shall annually be known as "Ben Masel Day" in the City of Madison.

Fiscal Note

No appropriation required.

