

# 2006 SPECIAL SESSION I

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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5092

Offered June 20, 2006

*Commending Ray and Mary Pollard and the Gospel Chicken House.*

Patrons—Hargrove, Janis and Peace; Senator: McDougle

WHEREAS, Ray and Mary Pollard, inspired by their tremendous love of gospel music, established the celebrated Gospel Chicken House in 1973 and luckily for the lovers of the music genre, they happened to own a chicken house that was no longer being used to raise chickens; and

WHEREAS, Southern gospel music mixed in with old-time country and spirited bluegrass tunes are enthusiastically performed every Saturday night on the Pollard's 84-acre farm located on Greenhouse Church Road in Montpelier; and

WHEREAS, Ray Pollard is a retired auto dealership parts/service manager and the farm is his family's home place; Ray and Mary Pollard have been married 64 years, have two grown children, Jane Williams and Robert Pollard, and five grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, the Gospel Chicken House began when word got around that Ray Pollard, who sang bass, and his fellow gospel group members were practicing in his chicken house every Saturday night; folks dropped by, and the numbers grew into a faithful following and a major audience for local gospel musicians and enthusiasts in Central Virginia and beyond; and

WHEREAS, for over three decades, gospel music enthusiasts have journeyed, some from great distances, to visit a humble chicken house out in the country to enjoy what may be America's longest-running gospel sing at the Gospel Chicken House; and

WHEREAS, the Pollards' chicken house-turned-music hall is 40-feet wide and 100-feet long with a cement-floor, a simple stage and sound system, a concessions area, and row upon row of old church seats, which accommodate 350 joyous gospel music fans every Saturday night; and

WHEREAS, there is no admission charge at the Gospel Chicken House, and singers and musicians perform for "love offerings" garnered from the generous crowd in cardboard buckets passed along the rows; concession sales of a variety of good things to eat fund the overhead expenses of the not-for-profit organization; and

WHEREAS, the 10-piece Gospel Chicken House Band is a mainstay every Saturday night and gospel music greats, such as The Cathedrals, Jeff and Sherri Easter, and Gold City have graced the stage, and all are encouraged to perform in front of the Gospel Chicken House audience; and

WHEREAS, the fabulous success of the Gospel Chicken House is due to the Pollards' hard work and longtime commitment with lots of help from Vicki Bruce, who has emceed most Saturday nights for 26 years, and the dedication of such great volunteers as Carolyn and Bill Packard, Wanda and Chris Branson, twins Ronald and Donald Lineberry, Vicki's husband Danny Bruce, Doug Fender, and Jackie Adams, to name a few, who work each week to keep the show going; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the Pollards' generosity and gospel music's inspirational message, people of all ages and from all walks of life across the Commonwealth, the nation, and even abroad have been blessed with uplifting entertainment and wonderful fellowship for many years at the Gospel Chicken House; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend Ray and Mary Pollard and the Gospel Chicken House for the joy and well-being they have brought over the years to countless fans of gospel music; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Ray and Mary Pollard as an expression of the General Assembly's best wishes for continued success in their mission.

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