

2008 SESSION

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 134

Offered January 24, 2008

Commending Ebenezer Baptist Church on the occasion of its 150th anniversary.

Patrons—McEachin; Delegate: Jones, D.C.

WHEREAS, Ebenezer Baptist Church of Richmond will celebrate its historic 150th anniversary in 2008; and

WHEREAS, in May 1858, jubilant worshipers marched from First African Baptist Church to Third African Baptist Church, beginning a long spiritual journey that would culminate in the present-day Ebenezer Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, the impressive history of Ebenezer Baptist Church began when Dr. Robert Ryland and a committee of founding members met at the Leigh Street home of John Adams to search for a location for a new church; and

WHEREAS, the site for the community's new Third African Baptist Church, which would become the beloved Ebenezer Baptist Church, was revealed in an amazing vision to founding member Benjamin Harris; the committee was compelled to purchase the very lot he envisaged for \$541.25, and dedicated members who lived west of Second Street and north of Broad Street worked diligently to raise the money to build a new church home; and

WHEREAS, the new congregation celebrated Ebenezer Baptist Church's Dedication Day on May 30, 1858, and Dr. W. T. Lindsay, a white pastor from Grace Baptist Church, was invited to minister to the new congregation, and he served until 1864, when the Reverend Peter Randolph became the church's first black pastor; and

WHEREAS, Ebenezer Baptist Church also became the home of the first public school for African-American children in the community of Richmond, which was established in the church's basement; and

WHEREAS, the faithful and hardworking congregation of Ebenezer Baptist Church has a long tradition of nurturing sister churches, and the first to be organized in 1867 was Cedar Street Memorial Baptist Church, which was followed by Saint John Baptist Church in 1870, Pleasant Grove and Riverview Baptist Churches in 1885, Mount Carmel Baptist Church in 1888, and Mount Vernon Baptist Church in 1905; and

WHEREAS, since its founding, Ebenezer Baptist Church has been served throughout its 150-year history by other immensely dedicated and able pastors, including the Reverend Richard Wells, Dr. William H. Stokes, Dr. Everett Eugene Smith, Dr. David Thomas Shannon, Sr., Dr. Wallace J. Cook, Dr. James Leary, and the church's current pastor Dr. Levy M. Armwood, Jr., who began his outstanding and dedicated service on April 6, 2003; and

WHEREAS, Restoration 2006, a million-dollar building project to restore and renovate Ebenezer Baptist Church for future generations, will be completed in May 2008 in time for the congregation's glorious 150th birthday celebration; and

WHEREAS, throughout its long history, Ebenezer Baptist Church has provided its devoted congregation, its neighbors, and the community a place to worship, to help others, and to grow in faith and service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Ebenezer Baptist Church on the occasion of the church's historic 150th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Ebenezer Baptist Church as an expression of the General Assembly's best wishes for a joyful celebration and continued success in its ministry.

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