

## 2012 SESSION

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### HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 467

Offered February 28, 2012

*Commending Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Church.*

Patrons—Farrell; Senator: Stosch

WHEREAS, Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Church, the cultural and religious gathering place for Lebanese Christians in Central Virginia, will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2012; and

WHEREAS, the first Maronites from Lebanon arrived in Richmond around 1895 and attended Saint Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Church Hill; the first Maronite Mass was celebrated in the home of William Moses Soffee on Franklin Street; and

WHEREAS, the Maronite population in Richmond continued to increase and, in 1912, Bishop Dennis O'Connell, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, granted the Maronite community the use of Saint Patrick's Roman Catholic Church during certain hours; and

WHEREAS, in June of 1914, the Maronite community renovated a hall over a local candy factory into a chapel, with Father Abdulla Tarabay from Pennsylvania serving as the first priest; and

WHEREAS, unfortunately, the hall was destroyed in a fire the following year, but the Maronite community came together and purchased and renovated another building on 33rd Street, naming it Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Church; and

WHEREAS, Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Church relocated once more, to Park Avenue, before purchasing land on Sadler Road in Glen Allen for a church and recreational complex, where members enjoy worship and fellowship today; and

WHEREAS, over the years, Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Church has been ably served by inspiring and faithful leaders, including Father Joseph Yesbeck, Monsignor Anthony Korkemaz, Monsignor Beshara Salwan, and Monsignor George M. Sebaali; and

WHEREAS, parishioners at Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Church participate in a variety of organizations, including the Ladies Auxiliary, Maronite Youth Organization, and Junior Youth Organization; and

WHEREAS, for nearly 30 years, Central Virginia residents have flocked to Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Church during its annual Lebanese Food Festival, which features such culinary delights as baked kibbi, spinach pie, and zalabia; and

WHEREAS, Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Church's Lebanese Food Festival draws more than 20,000 guests from the community who enjoy music and dancing and partake of the traditional Lebanese fare prepared by hardworking volunteers over the course of weeks; and

WHEREAS, a vital part of Central Virginia, Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Church looks forward to continuing to serve its members and the community while celebrating its rich history in 2012; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Church on the occasion of its 100th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Monsignor George M. Sebaali, pastor of Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Church, as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations and admiration for the church's rich history and service to the community.

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