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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 392

Offered February 27, 2018

Commending the Reverend Ivan T. Harris.

Patrons—Price, Aird and Mullin; Senator: Mason

WHEREAS, in 2018, the Reverend Ivan T. Harris celebrates 30 years of providing spiritual guidance as pastor of First Baptist Church Denbigh in Newport News; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Hampton University, Reverend Harris earned his bachelor of theology and doctor of divinity degrees from United Christian College in Goldsboro, North Carolina; he completed additional studies at Trinity College of the Bible and Theological Seminary in Indiana and received a certificate in leadership from Regent University; and

WHEREAS, as the longest serving pastor in First Baptist Church Denbigh's 155-year history, Reverend Harris has touched the lives of countless individuals through his inspiring words, commitment to community service, and focus on international ministry; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Harris began his service at First Baptist Church Denbigh in 1988 and assumed the full-time pastorate in 1991; under his leadership, the church has grown to include a congregation of some 2,500 members, four choirs, and over 50 committees and organizational ministries; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Harris has won the admiration and respect of his community for his commitment to service; as pastor at First Baptist Church Denbigh, he has overseen numerous charitable initiatives in Newport News such as a summer meals program for needy children and a church outreach center that includes a food pantry, clothes closet, and transitional housing for women; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Harris has also conducted outreach on a global scale through First Baptist Church Denbigh's adoption of a village in the African nation of Benin; since 2005, he has visited the village several times and overseen the donation of a water well, motorcycles, books, a Christian school, and medical and worship facilities; and

WHEREAS, a talented musician, Reverend Harris has released two albums of harmonica music entitled "Jesus Saves" and "He Delivered Me"; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Harris is the director of the Boys to Men Mentorship Program and a past president of the Peninsula Pastors' Council; he has served on the boards of Bon Secours Mary Immaculate Hospital and the Community Free Clinic of Newport News; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Harris has received numerous honors for his spiritual and community leadership, including the 2002 Hampton University Presidential Citizenship Award; in 2003, the Mayor of Newport News declared April 3 "Ivan T. Harris Day"; and

WHEREAS, during his distinguished career at First Baptist Church Denbigh, Reverend Harris has relied on his strong faith to triumph over adversity and has led his congregation in continued growth in membership, fellowship, and service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Reverend Ivan T. Harris on the occasion of his 30th anniversary as pastor of First Baptist Church Denbigh; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Reverend Ivan T. Harris as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his devotion to community service and global outreach.

INTRODUCED

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