

## 2020 SESSION

INTRODUCED

20109487D

### SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 65

Offered March 5, 2020

*Commending Highlands Fellowship Church.*

Patron—Pillion

WHEREAS, for 25 years, Highlands Fellowship Church has provided spiritual leadership, conducted generous outreach, and built a strong sense of community in Southwest Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in 1994, Jimmie Davidson and his family moved to Abingdon to establish Highlands Fellowship Church, which was originally known as Virginia Highlands Christian Fellowship; and

WHEREAS, Highlands Fellowship Church held its first service on Easter Sunday in 1995, with Jimmie Davidson as its founding pastor; the congregation met at a community center and in a local school until 2000, when it purchased its own building; and

WHEREAS, Highlands Fellowship Church opened a campus in Bristol in 2006 and has since opened Virginia locations in Marion, Wise, and Bluefield, as well as a location in Johnson City, Tennessee; the church also streams Sunday services online to congregants around the world; and

WHEREAS, Allen Jessee became lead pastor of Highlands Fellowship Church in 2012, and the church has grown significantly in both faith and number under his leadership; and

WHEREAS, Highlands Fellowship Church engages with young people through its Tri-Cities Speed School, Highlands Fellowship Students, and HFKidz ministries, and its Celebrate Recovery ministry helps members of the community in need to overcome life's challenges; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, Highlands Fellowship Church partnered with Bluefield College to launch HF College, an accredited program that allows students to gain practical experience in ministry; and

WHEREAS, in addition to its missionary work in France, Tanzania, Kenya, and Thailand, Highlands Fellowship Church has developed strategic partnerships with churches around the world and trained nearly 400 global pastoral leaders; and

WHEREAS, Highlands Fellowship Church operates two thrift stores in Abingdon and Bristol that serve approximately 700 people each week; the church also has a ministry called Simple Rhythms inside the Birthplace of Country Music Museum in Bristol; and

WHEREAS, one of Highlands Fellowship Church's most popular outreach events was Love Week, which spread joy and fellowship to thousands of people in Virginia and Tennessee in 2019; and

WHEREAS, over the course of its history, Highlands Fellowship Church has served generations of Southwest Virginia residents, baptizing more than 4,500 people, and has helped countless others find a spiritual home, where they are respected, accepted, and cared for; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That Highlands Fellowship Church hereby be commended on the occasion of its 25th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Allen Jessee, lead pastor of Highlands Fellowship Church, as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for the church's legacy of contributions to communities throughout Southwest Virginia.

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