

14101501D

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 89

Offered January 8, 2014

Prefiled January 7, 2014

*Commending the Reverend Dr. Earl Leslie Bledsoe.*

Patrons—McClellan and McQuinn

WHEREAS, the Reverend Dr. Earl Leslie Bledsoe was born on April 29, 1942, in Washington, D.C., and at a very young age he moved to Fauquier County, where he was reared by Annie and Spurgeon Tyler in their loving Christian home; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from W. C. Taylor High School in Warrenton, the Reverend Dr. Earl Leslie Bledsoe enlisted in the United States Army, where he served his country with valor and was honorably discharged after three years of military service; and

WHEREAS, following his military service, the Reverend Dr. Earl Leslie Bledsoe returned to civilian life and was employed by Atlantic Research Corporation in Gainesville, Virginia, and in Washington, D. C., he worked for ARA Dining Services, the United States Postal Service, and the Department of Corrections; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Dr. Earl Leslie Bledsoe relentlessly pursued higher education opportunities at Prince George Community College in Maryland, Northern Virginia Community College, Virginia Union University, and Howard University Without Walls, and earned a bachelor of arts degree in history and a master of arts degree in management from the Open University System; and

WHEREAS, in January 1971, the Reverend Dr. Earl Leslie Bledsoe responded to the call to the Gospel ministry and was licensed to preach by his home church, Cross Road Baptist Church, where he was ordained in June 1971; and

WHEREAS, to prepare himself for the ministry, the Reverend Dr. Earl Leslie Bledsoe studied at the Norfolk extension of Boston University and earned a Master of Divinity degree, cum laude, in 1979 and a Doctor of Ministry degree in 1997 from the Lancaster Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, where his dissertation was entitled "Therapeutic Preaching from the Perspective of an African American Free Church Pastor"; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Dr. Earl Leslie Bledsoe also studied clinical pastoral education from 1981 to 1983 at Saint Elizabeth Hospital in Washington, D.C., in order to minister to the criminally challenged and the mentally disabled; he enrolled in the certificate program in church management at Wake Forest University in 1987, the pastoral supervision program at Virginia Commonwealth University's Medical Center in 1994, the clinical pastoral education program at Hunter Holmes McGuire Veterans Hospital in 1996, and the certificate program at Harvard University's Leadership Institute in 2000; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Dr. Earl Leslie Bledsoe is actively involved in many community and theological organizations; he has served as former director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at the Richmond Virginia Seminary, and as adjunct professor in the Doctor of Ministry Program at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio; currently, he is the director of Field Study at the Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University, where he is influential in the molding of future pastors, teachers, evangelists, apologists, prophets, and others who have devoted their lives to the Christian ministry in order that the saints may be perfected and the church universal may be edified; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Dr. Earl Leslie Bledsoe has served in the pastoral ministry at Silver Hill Baptist Church in Morrisville, Pilgrim Baptist Church in Wilderness, and Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Prince William, and is currently the beloved pastor of Great Hope Baptist Church in Richmond, from which he is retiring after 30 years of faithful and dedicated Christian service; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Dr. Earl Leslie Bledsoe has remained a stalwart soldier on the battlefield for the Lord, proclaiming and teaching the uncompromised word of God, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the imprisoned, and ministering God's love to the least of these, and his works "do follow him"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Reverend Dr. Earl Leslie Bledsoe hereby be commended on the occasion of his retirement from the pastoral ministry; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Reverend Dr. Earl Leslie Bledsoe as an expression of the General Assembly's respect and admiration for his care of his flock and contributions to the City of Richmond and best wishes for a serene and productive retirement.