**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE PASTOR AND MRS. JAMES WESLEY WELCH OF ANDERSON COUNTY ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF MINISTRY TOGETHER AND TO EXTEND BEST WISHES FOR MANY MORE YEARS OF SPIRITUAL BLESSING AND FULFILLMENT.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate are pleased to learn that Pastor James Wesley Welch and his wife Hazel will celebrate their fiftieth anniversary of ministry on March 29, 2015; and

Whereas, with the Redback Band from Honea Path performing at Crossroads Fellowship Church, friends and members of former churches that Pastor Welch has served will help them celebrate. Hazel Welch will play the organ as their daughter, Beth Cannon, plays the piano and Pastor Welch sings; and

Whereas, James Welch began his ministry singing for Thea F. Jones Evangelistic Association that reached ten to twenty thousand people each night. He delivered his first sermon at Hood’s Chapel when Hazel was working as a telephone operator in college; and

Whereas, he met his beloved wife, Hazel, at Lee College, now Lee University, in Cleveland, Tennessee, and their ministry covered numerous states until they settled down in Honea Path; and

Whereas, some people had heard him preach in Georgia and wanted him to come back and preach again, and that started his career as a pastor and his lifetime of serving and sharing the Word of God with those who needed his ministry; and

Whereas, he preached at a church outside Cleveland, Tennessee, and then in Athens, Georgia. The couple went to Copeland and Branch, Alabama; then to Lincoln, Nebraska; and Saraland and Mobile, Alabama, where Pastor and Mrs. Welch started new churches with the Church of God; and

Whereas, they went to Washington, D. C., and began working with the National Evangelistic Institute, a large church still flourishing today; and

Whereas, they traveled back to Lincoln, Nebraska, and started another church before moving to Clinton, South Carolina, where they served for four years and where they began a journey with the Assembly of God; and

Whereas, in 1965, they came to the First Assembly of God in Honea Path and served there for twenty‑nine years until they retired in 1994; and

Whereas, Pastor Welch lovingly describes their work together saying that he preached while his supportive wife ran the church as she “sat behind the piano leading the choir getting everyone in the spirit”; and

Whereas, from 1988 to 2003, radio station WRIX delivered his sermons, and in the late 1960s WHPB carried the sermons live; and

Whereas, Pastor and Mrs. Welch are still grateful as they recall the healing that took place for a thirteen‑year‑old blind girl and many other blessings that occurred through their years of loving what they knew God had called them to do. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, congratulate Pastor and Mrs. James Wesley Welch of Anderson County on the occasion of their fiftieth anniversary of ministry together and extend best wishes for many more years of spiritual blessing and fulfillment.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Pastor James Wesley Welch.

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