**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR IRA S. “BUDDY” RAINWATER III OF FLORENCE FOR HIS DEDICATED MINISTRY TO HIS COMMUNITY AND THE CITIZENS OF FLORENCE COUNTY AND TO WISH HIM MUCH SUCCESS, HAPPINESS, AND GOD’S RICHEST BLESSINGS IN ALL HIS FUTURE ENDEAVORS.

Whereas, born on August 13, 1946, Ira S. “Buddy” Rainwater III attended McClenaghan High School in Florence. He continued his education at the Citadel and received his undergraduate degree from the Baptist College of Charleston, which is now known as Charleston Southern; and

Whereas, being raised in a family of faith, Buddy grew up attending First Baptist Church in Florence where he cultivated his relationship with Christ. In 1988, he and his wife, Marti, moved their memberships to Ebenezer Baptist Church where they became active in ministry. In 1995, Buddy and several other men in the church started a men’s Bible study that still meets together to this day; and

Whereas, Buddy was commissioned as a Special Deputy by the Florence County Sheriff in the 1970’s and assisted in the narcotics division. He also served as a State Constable for over twenty years; and

Whereas, after completing training at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy, Buddy transitioned from a State Constable to a Florence County Reserve Deputy. Through his hard work and his service to the Department, inmates, and the community, Buddy was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and later to Captain; and

Whereas, Buddy dedicated his life to the work of the Lord. In 2010, the Florence County Sheriff invited him to serve as chaplain for the department in order to provide counseling and spiritual support to the employees and inmates. He began and led weekly Bible studies at two correctional facilities in the Pee Dee area. In 2012, Buddy and his ministry team raised money to purchase a portable baptistery to baptize inmates. By the time he retired, they had baptized one thousand fifty‑eight inmates and two ministry team members; and

Whereas, aside from working with inmates, Buddy began a project providing a Bible to all of the patrol officers with the sheriff’s department, each inscribed with the officer’s name and the sheriff’s office badge. As word spread, Buddy received requests from divisions and was eventually able to distribute over four hundred Bibles; and.

Whereas, he plans to spend many happy hours of retirement with his family as he continues to be a devoted father and husband. His beloved wife of forty years, Marti, daughters Melanie and Sarah Elizabeth, sons, Sidney and Ted, and his ten grandchildren will be able to enjoy the benefits of his newfound free time; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are grateful for the years of dedication that Buddy has devoted to Florence County and wish him many years of enjoyment in his well‑earned retirement. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and honor Ira S. “Buddy” Rainwater III of Florence for his dedicated ministry to his community and to the citizens of Florence County and to wish him much success, happiness, and God’s richest blessings in all his future endeavors.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Ira S. “Buddy” Rainwater III.

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