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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 294**

Offered March 9, 2026

*Commending the Reverend Dr. Lehman D. Bates II.*

Patrons—Laufer and Callsen; Senator: Deeds

WHEREAS, the Reverend Dr. Lehman D. Bates II, a devoted religious leader in Charlottesville who has touched countless lives in the community through his advocacy and commitment to service, celebrated his 20th anniversary as pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in 2026; and

WHEREAS, a native of Columbus, Ohio, Lehman Bates began to cultivate his deep faith at a young age and is a second-generation pastor who was inspired by his family's heritage as spiritual leaders; and

WHEREAS, Lehman Bates worked as a corporate consultant for more than two decades before answering the call to the ministry in 1987; he was ordained in 1993 and served as a pastoral assistant and interim pastor before joining Ebenezer Baptist Church in Charlottesville in 2006; and

WHEREAS, since that time, Lehman Bates has helped the congregation of Ebenezer Baptist Church grow in faith and number through his transformational leadership; and

WHEREAS, Lehman Bates is active in the local community and sits on the boards of numerous humanitarian organizations; he has been a crucial leader in efforts to end homelessness, build trust between citizens and law-enforcement officers in the area, and improve race relations at the University of Virginia and in Charlottesville as a whole; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Lehman Bates, Ebenezer Baptist Church has performed extensive mission work and expanded outreach programs; he has personally traveled to more than a dozen countries on five continents to provide care and spiritual empowerment to individuals in need; and

WHEREAS, believing that all the people of the world are one human family, Lehman Bates has also partnered with numerous interfaith and multid denominational congregations to build a stronger sense of community in Charlottesville by fostering understanding and mutual respect; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Reverend Dr. Lehman D. Bates II on the occasion of his 20th anniversary as pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church; 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. Lehman D. Bates II as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his contributions to the community.

INTRODUCED

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