

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 177

Celebrating the life of the Honorable Barry D. Knight.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 26, 2026
Agreed to by the Senate, February 26, 2026

WHEREAS, the Honorable Barry D. Knight, who prided himself as a “good ole pig farmer from Pungo” and supported the agricultural sector in Hampton Roads for decades, and who was an esteemed statesman, representing the residents of parts of Chesapeake and Virginia Beach over the course of his distinguished 17-year tenure in the Virginia House of Delegates, died on February 19, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Barry Knight grew up in the former Princess Anne County and graduated from Kempsville High School; as a young adult, he worked on a neighbor's farm for several years, trapping pests and helping raise hogs for market; and

WHEREAS, Barry Knight spent his winters working as a long-haul truck driver to raise money to fulfill his lifelong dream of buying his own farm and ultimately established Barry D. Knight Farms in Virginia Beach, which produced as many as 25,000 finished hogs every year until his retirement in 2016; and

WHEREAS, over the course of his career as a farmer, Barry Knight was highly admired by his peers in the agricultural sector, receiving the American Farm Bureau's Virginia Young Farmer of the Year award, the Clean Water Farm Award, and the Virginia Beach Man of the Year in Agriculture award, among other accolades; and

WHEREAS, Barry Knight served as president of the Tidewater Pork Producers from 1984 to 1990 and was appointed by two governors as a member of the Virginia Pork Industry Board; he also served as chair of the Virginia Beach Planning Commission, guiding responsible growth and development in the community; and

WHEREAS, desirous to be of further service to the Commonwealth, Barry Knight ran for and was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in a special election in 2009; he initially represented the residents of the 81st District, which included parts of Virginia Beach and Chesapeake, and more recently represented the 98th District, which covers southeastern Virginia Beach; and

WHEREAS, Barry Knight introduced and supported a wide range of legislation to benefit all Virginians and strengthen the Hampton Roads Region, often characterizing his work as proudly representing his friends and neighbors; he was passionate about rural issues and a champion of environmental conservation who strove to build bipartisan consensus; and

WHEREAS, as chair of the House Appropriations Committee, Barry Knight developed a keen understanding of the Commonwealth's finances and the budgeting process; at various points in his career, he also served on the General Laws Committee; Rules Committee; Transportation Committee; Counties, Cities and Towns Committee; and Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee; and

WHEREAS, Barry Knight was a trusted mentor and a devoted friend who inspired his fellow lawmakers and other state officials through his integrity, loyalty, and enthusiasm for public service; and

WHEREAS, well known as a determined advocate for his constituents and farmers across the Commonwealth, Barry Knight was selected as a six-time Champion of Free Enterprise award-winner by the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Man of the Year by the Virginia Agribusiness Council, Port Champion by the Virginia Maritime Association, and Legislator of the Year by the Virginia Chamber of Commerce and the Virginia Sheriffs' Association; and

WHEREAS, outside of his career and public service, Barry Knight was an accomplished traveler who had visited almost every state in the United States, an avid hunter and fisherman who had fished from the Bahamas to Alaska, and a skilled pilot who enjoyed flying friends around the Pungo area in his helicopter; and

WHEREAS, Barry Knight was a man of uncommon mechanical skill and practical intelligence, for whom no piece of equipment was unfamiliar or beyond his mastery; whether it involved an engine, blade, bucket, hitch, or hydraulic line, he could operate it, repair it, and—more often than not—improve it through sheer know-how and steady diligence; and

WHEREAS, those who knew Barry Knight best recall that the only machine he was ever said to have been formally taught to operate was his helicopter, and, even then, it was evident he had the instincts and confidence of a man who would have it figured out before the lesson was over; and

WHEREAS, Barry Knight will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife of 42 years, Paula; his sons, Hunter, Kyle, and Forrest, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues on both sides of the aisle; and

WHEREAS, Barry Knight was wise as a sage and a man of great intellect despite having no formal post-

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secondary educational experience; he loved people—helping them, uplifting them, and laughing with them—and he was known by all as a loyal and trusted confidant, colleague, and, most notably, as a husband, father, brother, and friend; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of the Honorable Barry D. Knight, respected farmer in Virginia Beach and the epitome of a citizen legislator; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of the Honorable Barry D. Knight as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.