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## **HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 606**

Offered May 13, 2024

Prefiled May 10, 2024

*Commending the Reverend Dr. Vernon C. Walton.*

Patrons—Seibold, Keys-Gamarra, Shin, Torian, Clark, Glass and Hayes

WHEREAS, for 10 years, the Reverend Dr. Vernon C. Walton has provided inspirational spiritual leadership and touched countless lives in Northern Virginia through outreach programs as the senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Vienna; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Walton was selected as the 19th senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Vienna in February 2014 and has upheld the church's 154-year-old legacy of service to the residents of Vienna through his charismatic, energetic, and innovative leadership; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, Vernon Walton has increased the capacity of First Baptist Church of Vienna's 33 ministries, building community engagement and creating additional opportunities for mission work; and

WHEREAS, placing a high value on the importance of a good education, Vernon Walton directed First Baptist Church of Vienna to partner with local elementary schools and other organizations to provide tutoring for young people; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Walton has implemented programs on cultural awareness and social justice to empower and uplift marginalized communities, including an annual Juneteenth Celebration, the Justice and Legislative Sunday, and Be the Church Sundays; and

WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Vernon Walton and members of the First Baptist Church of Vienna congregation hosted vaccination clinics and distributed more than 25,000 boxes of food to families in need throughout Northern Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Walton and First Baptist Church of Vienna have also provided more than one million meals to people worldwide through a partnership with Rise Against Hunger; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Walton holds degrees from Virginia Union University, New York Theological Seminary, and the United Theological Seminary of Dayton, Ohio; before joining First Baptist Church of Vienna, he served as senior pastor of Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Englewood, New Jersey, was elected to the Englewood City Council, and was the first Black member of the Bergen County Board of Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, First Baptist Church of Vienna commemorated Vernon Walton's 10th anniversary as senior pastor with the Decade of Dedication special event in May 2024, which featured a full weekend of programs to honor his achievements and faithful service to the congregation over the past 10 years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Reverend Dr. Vernon C. Walton hereby be commended on the occasion of his 10th anniversary as senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Vienna; 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. Vernon C. Walton as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for his legacy of leadership and contributions to the residents of Vienna.