



HR0996

LRB104 22502 ECR 38947 r

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Bishop
4 James Curtis Austin Sr. of Chicago, who passed away on June 30,
5 2026; and

6 WHEREAS, Bishop Austin was born on January 3, 1946; he
7 received his call to ministry prior to receiving a degree in
8 biology and a minor in chemistry from the University of
9 Illinois in 1967; he was joined in holy matrimony to his
10 beloved wife, Lady Vernesta T. Austin, with whom he shared a
11 beautiful life, including raising their children, James Jr.
12 (Yashika), Dorcas, Prisca, and Marcus, and grandchildren,
13 James Curtis "Hudson" Austin III and Violet Dolores Austin;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Bishop Austin was a dedicated pastor, spiritual
16 teacher, and uncompromising preacher of his faith; he was
17 appointed pastor of the St. Luke Church of God in Christ, the
18 largest progressive Pentecostal church on the Near North Side
19 of Chicago, in 1978; and

20 WHEREAS, Bishop Austin was consecrated to the sacred
21 office of bishop in 2004, serving as the Prelate of Illinois
22 East Fifth Jurisdiction and overseeing more than 15 churches

1 in the Church of God in Christ while also serving with
2 distinction in The National Adjutancy Corps of the Church Of
3 God In Christ; and

4 WHEREAS, Bishop Austin continuously served the underserved
5 and the underprivileged in the Near North Chicago community,
6 where St. Luke has stood for more than 75 years, and around the
7 world, partnering with organizations, including Tabitha House,
8 a home for the homeless, and supporting the nation of Liberia
9 in West Africa, which became a special concern of his heart
10 after traveling there in March 2018; and

11 WHEREAS, Bishop Austin was a visionary leader whose
12 accomplishments included producing "The Legacy of a Leader", a
13 commemorative documentary on the life of the late Bishop
14 Charles Harrison Mason, and authoring two inspiring books,
15 Preach, a collaboration with Lady Austin, and The God-Ordained
16 Life; and

17 WHEREAS, Bishop Austin led the St. Luke Church of God in
18 Christ Youth Choir to great acclaim, having served as its
19 president, director, and soloist since its formation in 1963,
20 leading the choir to record for Harold Freeman's Righteous
21 label, GJ, Millennial, and privately-pressed albums; and

22 WHEREAS, Bishop Austin found joy during his downtime in

1 riding his bike along the Chicago lakefront, taking brisk
2 walks, traveling, reading, and spending cherished moments with
3 his family; therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
5 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
6 we mourn the passing of Bishop James Curtis Austin Sr. and
7 extend our sincere condolences to his family, friends, and all
8 who knew and loved him; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
10 presented to the family of Bishop Austin as an expression of
11 our deepest sympathy.