



HR0688

LRB102 26460 MST 36899 r

1

HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of  
3 Representatives wish to congratulate the Rev. Dr. Craig Melvin  
4 Smith on celebrating 50 years of preaching, from 1972 to 2022;  
5 and

6           WHEREAS, Rev. Smith is the Senior Pastor of the Freedom  
7 Baptist Church of the Greater Chicago Area in Hillside; and

8           WHEREAS, Rev. Smith was born and raised in Peoria, the  
9 third of seven children; he was called to preach the Gospel in  
10 1972 in his junior year at the University of Illinois in  
11 Urbana-Champaign; and

12           WHEREAS, Rev. Smith preached his first sermon at his home  
13 church, the Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church of Peoria,  
14 in February of 1972; and

15           WHEREAS, Rev. Smith was ordained at his home church in  
16 April of 1974; and

17           WHEREAS, Rev. Smith's structured academic and  
18 pastoral-theological preparation has earned him a Bachelor of  
19 Arts from the University of Illinois in 1973, a Master of  
20 Divinity from the Northern Baptist Seminary in 2003, and a

1 Doctor of Ministry from the United Theological Seminary in  
2 2009; and

3 WHEREAS, Rev. Smith started the Freedom Baptist Church on  
4 April 9, 2000, and over 2,500 people have called Freedom  
5 Hillside their church home since the first worship service was  
6 held in the Hillside Theater; and

7 WHEREAS, Rev. Smith's previous professional and pastoral  
8 assignments have included serving as a personal banker for a  
9 commercial national bank, as a crime analyst for the Peoria  
10 Police Department, as a pastor for Providence Baptist Church,  
11 and as a pastor of the Metropolitan Baptist Church of the  
12 Westside in Chicago; and

13 WHEREAS, Rev. Smith is in his 20th year as a senior pastor  
14 and teacher at Freedom Baptist Church; he preaches Sunday  
15 worship services and regularly teaches two Bible classes  
16 weekly, Men of the Bible (MOB) and Word on Wednesday; and

17 WHEREAS, Rev. Smith has dedicated 50 years to the ministry  
18 of worship and to work for his community; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
20 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
21 we congratulate the Rev. Dr. Craig Melvin Smith on celebrating

1 50 years of preaching, and we wish him many more wonderful  
2 years; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
4 presented to Rev. Smith as a symbol of our respect and esteem.