



HR1181

LRB097 22169 MST 70900 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives wish to congratulate the Pilgrim Baptist
4 Church on the occasion of the 95th anniversary of its founding;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, The history of Pilgrim Baptist Church began in May
7 of 1917; there was no black Baptist church in Rockford, so
8 Meissieurs Grant Madison, Louis Branch, Walter Brooks, and a
9 gentleman named Banks organized a Sunday school and prayer
10 meeting; the Reverend J.C. China was elected as the
11 Superintendent of the Sunday school; the church was organized
12 on August 6, 1917, at the home of Brother Grant Madison at 812
13 West Street and was subsequently named Pilgrim Rest Baptist
14 Church; and

15 WHEREAS, Twenty-two charter members took place at that
16 first meeting, including Reverend J.C. China and Reverend
17 Holden, Brothers Grant Madison, T.P. McGee, Thomas Cochran,
18 Louis Branch, Robert Goza, E.P. Jones, Albert Earney, Ford
19 Smith, and James Davis, Brother Banks and Brother Cook, Sisters
20 M.A. Madison, Sarah Branch, Lillian Goza, Martha Rook, Mary
21 Dulin, Delia Cochran, Rachel Jackson Flood and A. Smith, and
22 Sister Johnson; and

1 WHEREAS, The church called its first pastor, Reverend Mr.
2 T.P. McGee in October 1917; under his leadership the property
3 at 846 Montague Street was purchased; the entire congregation
4 marched to their new location on the third Sunday in June 1918;
5 in February of 1919, under the tutelage of Reverend G.W.
6 Dudley, a new location was acquired on 812 West Street and
7 occupied in July of that year and was considered the first
8 "real" church building by its congregants; and

9 WHEREAS, In 1944, the Pilgrim Builders Club was formed to
10 pay off the mortgage and plans were laid for remodeling the
11 church; the word "Rest" was removed from the church name in
12 1947, and a year later work began on beautifying the church; in
13 1951, volunteers helped obtain pledges from members for the
14 Building Fund drive; by 1954, serious consideration was being
15 given to enlarging the building to give Pilgrim members a
16 church home they could be proud of; and

17 WHEREAS, 1958 was a memorable year for the Pilgrim members;
18 the Building Fund continued to grow, and in the fall the church
19 came into possession of 3.7 acres of land on which to erect the
20 new building; on the second Sunday in September, a dedication
21 of service of thanksgiving for the new property was held at the
22 site; and

23 WHEREAS, December of 1959 saw the church presented with

1 completed drawings for the new building; it was announced on
2 March 30, 1960, that ground breaking would begin in April; the
3 church moved into the new building on the 12th of March 1961;
4 additions to the physical edifice have been many, including a
5 mosaic completed in 1972; the mortgage for the new church was
6 burned in April 1973; and

7 WHEREAS, The physical manifestations of this structure of
8 hope will be for Pilgrim Baptist Church to have a nursing home
9 for the elderly, a children's home for homeless youth, a center
10 for preschoolers, a credit union, and a center for religious
11 education; all of these will serve to realize Pilgrim's
12 greatest dream, that the community and the church be one, a
13 communion; therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
15 NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
16 we congratulate Pilgrim Baptist Church on their founding, their
17 history, and wish them well with their future endeavors; and be
18 it further

19 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
20 presented to the members of the Pilgrim Baptist Church on the
21 occasion of the celebration of their 95th anniversary.