

HR256 INTRODUCED



1 HR256
2 BYK2WQJ-1
3 By Representatives Shaw, Hulsey
4 RFD:
5 First Read: 17-Mar-26



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HR _____ HONORING DR. JAMES E. GRAY ON THE OCCASION OF HIS
RETIREMENT AS SENIOR PASTOR OF HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH.

WHEREAS, it is with profound appreciation and highest
esteem that Dr. James E. "Buddy" Gray is honored on the
occasion of his retirement from service as Senior Pastor of
Hunter Street Baptist Church in Hoover, Alabama, in the
summer of 2026, after a ministry that has touched countless
lives and blessed the State of Alabama in immeasurable ways;
and

WHEREAS, for more than four decades, Dr. Gray has
served Hunter Street Baptist Church with steadfast faith,
deep humility, biblical conviction, and a shepherd's heart,
becoming not only a respected pastor in this state, but also
a trusted spiritual guide, counselor, encourager, and friend
to generations of Alabamians; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gray first began serving Hunter Street
Baptist Church on October 15, 1978, as a part-time youth
pastor, and that same day he met Tricia, who would become
his faithful wife and partner in ministry for more than 40
years; after further preparation for ministry, he returned
to Hunter Street and became its Senior Pastor on June 1,
1986; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gray accepted the call to lead the
church as a 29-year-old pastor at a pivotal moment in its



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29 history, when the congregation averaged approximately 220
30 members and faced challenges; through his faithful
31 leadership, the church was renewed, strengthened, and
32 prepared for a remarkable new season of ministry; and

33 WHEREAS, during his tenure, Dr. Gray led Hunter
34 Street through one of the most defining moments in its
35 history, including its relocation from western Birmingham to
36 Hoover; the congregation held its first official service at
37 its new Hoover campus on Easter Sunday in 1989, a milestone
38 that marked the beginning of extraordinary growth and
39 outreach; and

40 WHEREAS, under Dr. Gray's leadership, Hunter Street
41 Baptist Church grew into a thriving congregation of
42 approximately 5,000 members, but his ministry was never
43 measured merely by numbers; rather, it was marked by changed
44 lives, stronger families, deeper discipleship, faithful
45 missions, clear biblical teaching, and a church culture
46 rooted in love for Christ and genuine care for one another;
47 and

48 WHEREAS, those who know Dr. Gray best consistently
49 testify not only to his gifts as a preacher and leader, but
50 to the uncommon warmth and faithfulness with which he has
51 served people in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of
52 life; he has stood beside families in seasons of joy and
53 grief; and

54 WHEREAS, Dr. Gray has also made a lasting investment
55 in the future through his discipleship of young people,
56 especially through a ministry he has led for roughly 20



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57 years with 12th-grade boys, helping them establish strong
58 theological and biblical foundations before entering college
59 and adult life; and

60 WHEREAS, in addition to his faithful service to
61 Hunter Street Baptist Church, Dr. Gray has served the
62 broader Christian community with distinction, including
63 service as President of the Alabama Baptist Convention and
64 leadership on the Board of Trustees of The Southern Baptist
65 Theological Seminary, including service as chair; his
66 ministry has been recognized with honors from both The
67 Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Southwestern
68 Baptist Theological Seminary, reflecting the wide respect he
69 has earned across the denomination and beyond; and

70 WHEREAS, as the 14th pastor of Hunter Street Baptist
71 Church, Dr. Gray has carried forward a heritage of
72 faithfulness more than a century in the making, while also
73 helping shape the church's witness and ministry for
74 generations yet to come; now therefore,

75 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
76 LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, That Dr. James E. "Buddy" Gray is
77 hereby commended on the occasion of his retirement as Senior
78 Pastor of Hunter Street Baptist Church, and we express
79 heartfelt gratitude for his extraordinary ministry and
80 enduring legacy, along with warmest wishes for continued
81 health, joy, peace, and abundant blessing in the years
82 ahead.