**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR PASTOR JERRY BLASSINGAME, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SOTERIA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND SENIOR PASTOR OF SOTERIA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, FOR HIS VITAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO HIS COMMUNITY.

Whereas, the South Carolina Senate appreciates the passion with which Pastor Jerry Blassingame assists individuals who have been incarcerated to reenter society, helping them to become productive citizens through the work of Soteria Community Development Corporation (CDC); and

Whereas, he attended Columbia International University and studied architectural engineering at Greenville Technical College, and he was a Chuck Colson scholar at Wheaton College in Illinois and received a certification in correctional ministry with an emphasis in prisoner reentry; and

Whereas, in 1995, Mr. Blassingame received a twenty‑year prison sentence and was paroled in 1999 after serving three and a half years; and

Whereas, since he was granted a pardon in 2004, he has fought for change in legislation and is a social entrepreneur who advocates for social enterprise in the nonprofit sector; and

Whereas, a 2009‑2010 graduate of the Leadership Greenville class 36, Pastor Blassingame served on the PTA board for A. J. Whittenberg Elementary as president‑elect from 2010 to 2012 and as the 2012‑2013 president. He also served as the 2014‑2015 PTSA president of P. J. Fisher Middle School and as president‑elect for the Southwest Council PTA of Greenville County; and

Whereas, he became the vice president of Correctional Ministries and Chaplain Association International in 2015, which is based in Wheaton College under the auspices of the Institute for Prison Ministries, and he was a 2016 Fellow of Just Leadership USA and the chair of the Greenville Reentry Coalition; and

Whereas, under Pastor Blassingame’s leadership, Soteria CDC has been recognized for extensive community service. In 2004, the corporation received the Prison Aftercare Award from Transition of Prisoners, Inc.; in 2008, the South Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations Award for outstanding leadership and service to low‑income neighborhoods and communities in Greenville County; and in 2009, the Max Heller Neighborhood Improvement Award for exemplary efforts towards neighborhood improvement and empowerment from the Greater Greenville Chamber of Commerce; and

Whereas, in 2013, Soteria CDC was honored with an award from the Institute of Prison Ministry for prison aftercare and the 2017 Mother Emanuel Nine Award for Economic and Social Justice; and

Whereas, Pastor Blassingame lives in Greenville with his beloved wife of twenty years, Stephanie, and three of their children; and

Whereas the Senate of the State of South Carolina appreciates the outstanding work of Jerry Blassingame to empower individuals and the community by promoting education, affordable housing, financial literacy, community and economic development, and entrepreneurship in the Greenville community, across our great State, and throughout the nation. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and honor Pastor Jerry Blassingame, executive director of Soteria Community Development Corporation and senior pastor of Soteria Christian Fellowship, for his vital contributions to the community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Pastor Jerry Blassingame.

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