

**No. R-352. House concurrent resolution honoring Nicholas Monte, Bennington County's chocolatier extraordinaire.**

(H.C.R.294)

Offered by Representatives Morrissey of Bennington, Cooper of Pownal, Corcoran of Bennington, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Greer of Bennington, Hunter of Manchester, James of Manchester, Nigro of Bennington, and Pinsonault of Dorset

Offered by Senators Bongartz and Plunkett

*Whereas*, in 1988, Nick Monte and his wife, Judy, opened the Village Peddler gift store in East Arlington, allegedly to slow down from being a general store owner in Arlington, and he introduced chocolate into the store, thus beginning a second-career journey as a chocolatier, and

*Whereas*, his chocolate talents are an amalgamation of creative artistry and technical expertise, using specialized tools, including an enrober, a cooling tunnel, and tempering machines, and

*Whereas*, the delicious confection's presence has expanded to include the Chocolatorium, a unique chocolate exhibit and a fun place to explore that welcomes visitors to "immerse yourself in the wonderful world of chocolate," through a film, self-guided tour, or participation in a chocolate-making experience that allows visitors to become chocolatiers, and

*Whereas*, in 2002, Nick Monte expanded his chocolate domain, opening the Village Chocolate Shoppe (VCS) in Bennington, the home of Benny, the 100-pound chocolate moose and his wife, Molly, and

*Whereas*, that same year, Nick Monte greatly enhanced his chocolatiering skills when, as a nontraditional older student, he graduated from the intensive candy school program offered by Retail Confectioners International (RCI) at Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania, and

*Whereas*, in 2004, he became the host of summertime family-friendly events for chocolate lovers of all ages, including fundraising programs for local causes, and

*Whereas*, for 15 years, Nick Monte has been a proud exhibitor in the Vermont building at the Eastern States Exhibition in West Springfield, Massachusetts, specializing in chocolates, caramels, and caramel apples, and

*Whereas*, in 2013, as a fundraising event for the Bennington-based Project Against Violent Encounters, the VCS set out to establish a record for the world's largest peanut butter cup, and

*Whereas*, twice, his colleagues specializing in chocolate honored him with the RCI's best Easter idea award; in 2001, for the "Patches Family" and, in 2024, for "Rabbit Stew," and

*Whereas*, when not making chocolate treats, Nick Monte is a proud Lions Club member, an association dating back half a century, and

*Whereas*, in a familial collaboration with his wife, Judy; daughters Denise and Sherry; and son Ken, Nick Monte, at 88 years of age, continues his amazing career in the world of chocolate, *now therefore be it*

***Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:***

That the General Assembly honors Nicholas Monte, Bennington County's chocolatier extraordinaire, *and be it further*

***Resolved:*** That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Nick Monte, the Village Chocolate Shoppe, and the Village Peddler.