

**No. R-354. House concurrent resolution congratulating Inspirational Bible Book & Gifts of Bennington, Vermont's last remaining Christian bookstore, on its 50th anniversary.**

(H.C.R.296)

Offered by Representatives Greer of Bennington, Morrissey of Bennington, Cooper of Pownal, Corcoran of Bennington, Durfee of Shaftsbury, and Nigro of Bennington

Offered by Senators Bongartz and Plunkett

*Whereas*, religion has always played a central role in the life of Jacob Esh, who was born in 1941 and raised in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in a traditional Amish farming family, and

*Whereas*, in 1970, he married Lorraine, with whom he has happily shared his life for the past 55 years, and they began selling Christian books from store racks located in bus stations, grocery stores, pharmacies, and other locations, which eventually surpassed 40 points of sale, and

*Whereas*, in December 1975, Jacob and Lorraine Esh decided to consolidate their retail business to a single site and rented a small space inside a mall on North Street in Bennington, and

*Whereas*, after several moves, in 1982, Jacob and Lorraine Esh purchased a duplex at 110 County Street that would serve as their residence until 1995 and the store's home ever since, and

*Whereas*, sales were steady during the 1980s, when roughly 30 Christian bookstores operated in Vermont, and

*Whereas*, in the store's early years, approximately one-third of the revenue was derived from musical-related sales, including sheet music and CDs, and

*Whereas*, in the digital retail age, the market for religious-related merchandise, such as greeting cards and music products, is no longer robust, and Inspirational Bible Book & Gifts is today the last traditional Christian bookstore operating in Vermont, and

*Whereas*, despite this economic challenge, Jacob Esh proudly opens the store each business day, a mission based on his abiding religious faith, *now therefore be it*

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

That the General Assembly congratulates Inspirational Bible Book & Gifts of Bennington, Vermont's last remaining Christian bookstore, on its 50th anniversary, *and be it further*

***Resolved:*** That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Inspirational Bible Book & Gifts.