

2012 -- H 8241

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012

H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N

CONGRATULATING FATHER CHARLES DOWNING ON HIS RETIREMENT

Introduced By: Representatives Morgan, Serpa, and Nunes

Date Introduced: June 05, 2012

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, All too often those people who contribute to society the most are among the
2 least recognized. Their life's work touches many, while their characteristic modesty and
3 emphasis on the needs of others mean that these gifts are given with no expectation of reward or
4 reciprocation; and

5 WHEREAS, Father Charles Downing, pastor of St. Joseph's Church in West Warwick, is
6 one such wonderful individual. He has spent his life reaching out to people in need and providing
7 encouragement, both one-on-one and from the altar. His kind, uplifting, and profound words
8 have led many to a more fulfilling spiritual existence; and

9 WHEREAS, Father Downing was ordained into the priesthood after completing his
10 theological training at the American College of the University of Louvain in Belgium in 1965.
11 Father Downing was then appointed as a teacher at Our Lady of Providence High School
12 Seminary, where for over twenty-five years he influenced young men who went on to embrace
13 the priesthood and other vocations; and

14 WHEREAS, Following the 1989 closing of Our Lady of Providence, Father Downing
15 was assigned as pastor of St. Joseph's Church in West Warwick, where he has served as a faithful
16 leader for twenty-three years; and

17 WHEREAS, In addition to providing his many parishioners with leadership and spiritual
18 guidance, Father Downing has also proven to be a dynamic force within the community. During
19 his time as pastor of St. Joseph's Church, his ability to earn the confidence of his parishioners has
20 allowed him to spearhead a number of improvements. These changes have been possible due to

1 Father Downing's financial prowess, a characteristic not typically associated with men of the
2 cloth. When he was initially appointed pastor, St. Joseph's was in financial debt. Through the
3 generosity of parishioners and Father Downing's vision and hard work, the debt was paid off and
4 the parish is now operating with surpluses; and

5 WHEREAS, Father Downing was also responsible for a 2002 addition to St. Joseph's
6 School, for expanding the amount of land owned by the parish, and for a series of enhancements
7 to the church, including new floors, carpeting, an organ, and church bells that were introduced on
8 Thanksgiving morning. Under Father Charles' leadership, St. Joseph's School has flourished.
9 The thriving school leads the Pawtuxet Valley in the field of Catholic education; and

10 WHEREAS, Father Charles is leaving St. Joseph's Church as one of the most financially
11 stable parishes in the diocese, with a school that acts as a beacon for the Catholic faith. Perhaps
12 his greatest legacy is a congregation that is united and supportive of the mission of the Church,
13 that is deeply devoted to Catholic values, and that is ready for even more growth as a result of his
14 inspired leadership; and

15 WHEREAS, Father Downing has spent his life in devout service to God. Through that
16 unification, he has served and blessed the faithful, enriched the spiritual lives of many Rhode
17 Islanders, and earned our respect and admiration for his devotion and accomplishments; now,
18 therefore be it

19 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
20 Providence Plantations hereby congratulates Father Charles Downing on his selfless and
21 dedicated service to Saint Joseph's Church. We wish him the very best health, future happiness,
22 and continued success in his new ventures; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to
24 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Father Charles Downing.

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