H.R. No. 451

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, The city of Dallas lost a dynamic and compassionate community leader with the death of Bishop Omar Jahwar on March 11, 2021, at the age of 47; and

WHEREAS, Omar Jahwar was born on April 3, 1973, to Larry and Rosetta Jefferson, and he grew up in the Oak Cliff neighborhood with four siblings, Leon, Roman, Larry, and Fayth; from an early age, he was an avid reader and a gifted musician, and he attended Lancaster High School, where he was the first Black student body president; after narrowly avoiding a prison sentence as a troubled teenager, he committed himself at the age of 17 to helping other young people, volunteering to conduct intervention sessions with gang members at Gainesville State School; and

WHEREAS, In 1997, Bishop Jahwar was honored at the White House for his efforts in Gainesville and became the youngest person ever to win the national Achievement Against the Odds award from the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, and the following year, he founded the nonprofit group Urban Specialists, which works to eliminate urban violence; in 2000, he negotiated a peace treaty between the Blood and Crip gangs in Dallas, and in 2002, he traveled to Russia to consult about gang violence there; in 2019, Urban Specialists launched the OGU program, which trains former gang leaders to mentor at-risk youth, and that same year, Bishop Jahwar embarked upon the national Heal America Tour, which has reached 70,000 people in cities across America; and

WHEREAS, A man of deep religious faith, Bishop Jahwar was presiding bishop of the Kingdom Covenant of Churches and senior pastor of Kingdom WAR Legacy Church in South Dallas; in 2016, he was a guest of Speaker of the House Paul Ryan at the State of the Union Address, and the following year, Urban Specialists was recognized with the International Humanitarian Award in Dallas; in 2019, Bishop Jahwar received the Rise and Shine Award from WFAA, the Dallas ABC news affiliate; and

WHEREAS, Family was paramount to Bishop Jahwar, and he was a loving husband to his wife, Anita, and the proud father of four children, Omar, Tabia, Omni, and Anaya; and

WHEREAS, Omar Jahwar lived a full and generous life devoted to his family, his community, and his faith, and his legacy of leadership and his commitment to justice and nonviolence will continue to inspire all those who were fortunate enough to know him; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of Bishop Omar Jahwar and extend heartfelt sympathy to his family, his congregation, and his many friends and colleagues; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Bishop Omar Jahwar.

Sherman, Sr.

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.R. No. 451 was unanimously adopted by a rising vote of the House on April 1, 2021.

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Chief Clerk of the House