

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1053

By Sparks

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Men of Valor.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly take great pleasure in recognizing those estimable organizations that are devoted to improving the lives of people in this State; and

WHEREAS, one such organization is Men of Valor, which is committed to winning men in prison to Jesus Christ and discipling them; the organization's purpose is to equip men in prison to reenter society as men of integrity and become givers to the community rather than takers; and

WHEREAS, more than 50,000 inmates are presently incarcerated in Tennessee's adult prisons and jails, and statistics show that ninety-seven percent of them will one day be released; nationally, approximately seventy percent will end up back behind bars within three years, and in Tennessee, over fifty percent of men on parole or probation will return to prison; and

WHEREAS, many of these men are husbands and fathers; incarceration leaves their families struggling through financial troubles, social stigma, residential instability, and behavioral problems, while their children will most likely grow up in poverty and see few opportunities outside of a life of crime; and

WHEREAS, research shows that without intervention, seventy percent of inmates' children end up in prison; these children have children, and the cycle continues for generations; and

WHEREAS, while many men leave prison intending to live differently, most do not have the skills, resources, or support to establish a new life. Their histories are filled with poverty-stricken childhoods; dysfunctional, abusive, or absent parents; and drug and alcohol abuse; and

WHEREAS, when released from prison, most men simply have nowhere to go; employment prospects are virtually nonexistent for felons, and these men end up returning to their old neighborhoods and falling back into the same life that led them to prison; and

WHEREAS, Men of Valor knows that consistent encouragement, support, accountability, and training are the keys to shaping these men into productive, responsible citizens who become good husbands and fathers, and Men of Valor provides aftercare and reentry services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week; and

WHEREAS, residential support is of the utmost importance, giving men time to get back on their feet. Job training and placement are essential because most men do not have marketable skills or a good employment history; various classes give men the knowledge they need to live a different kind of life, including manhood training, budgeting, recovery meetings, Bible studies, job readiness, marriage classes, and parent training; and

WHEREAS, Men of Valor's aftercare and reentry services are the reason that the recidivism rate for men who complete the entire one-year program has stayed at or below fifteen percent; and

WHEREAS, the organization can currently only provide enough resources for a limited number of men to receive the residential support they need to increase their chances of ongoing success; the Men of Valor campus, known as Valor Ridge, will allow the organization to work with many more men; and

WHEREAS, Men of Valor hopes that one day, every man who graduates from its prison program will have the opportunity to participate in its residential discipleship academy for one year as he prepares to positively impact his family, his community, and the world; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

CONCURRING, that we recognize and commend Men of Valor for its devoted service to families and communities throughout the nation, extending our deepest gratitude for the organization's important work and our best wishes for its continued success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.