

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013

H.R. 1010
May 7, 2013
HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

H

D

HOUSE RESOLUTION DRHR10356-LG-143 (04/24)

Sponsors: Committee on Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

Referred to:

1 A HOUSE RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF LEANDER ALTON
2 RESPASS, THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN POLICE OFFICER IN THE
3 ELIZABETH CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT.

4 Whereas, Leander Alton Respass was born on February 6, 1917, in Elizabeth City,
5 North Carolina, to Henry Respass and Annie Lucas Respass; and

6 Whereas, Leander Alton Respass graduated from P.W. Moore High School, where
7 he was the captain of the varsity football team; and

8 Whereas, Leander Alton Respass received several athletic scholarship offers and
9 chose to attend Shaw University, where he played football until an injury caused him to leave
10 the team; and

11 Whereas, Leander Alton Respass later earned an associate's degree in Law
12 Enforcement and Criminal Justice from Beaufort County Community College in 1972 and
13 furthered his education by taking courses and training sessions at the College of The
14 Albemarle; and

15 Whereas, Leander Alton Respass was married to Beulah Lamb Respass and was the
16 father of 10 children, all of whom attended college; and

17 Whereas, Leander Alton Respass worked as a porter for the Standard Drug
18 Company for 23 years; and

19 Whereas, on April 13, 1963, Leander Alton Respass began working as the first
20 African-American police officer in the Elizabeth City Police Department; and

21 Whereas, according to statements made by then chief of police, Clarence Owens, to
22 the local newspaper, Leander Alton Respass became a member of the department on his own
23 merit and was not sponsored by any organization; and

24 Whereas, at the beginning of his career, Officer Respass, at the age of 44, was
25 assigned to a late night shift on the weekends in high-crime areas that he patrolled on foot
26 carrying only a night stick; and

27 Whereas, Leander Alton Respass gained the respect and admiration of the members
28 of his community and his fellow police officers; and

29 Whereas, Leander Alton Respass excelled as a police officer, earning the rank of
30 corporal in 1973 and sergeant in 1975; and

31 Whereas, after 21 years of service, Sergeant Respass retired from the police
32 department in 1984 but remained on staff as a consultant until his death on March 21, 1993;
33 and



1 Whereas, in remembrance and recognition of the 50th anniversary of Leander Alton
2 Respass becoming Elizabeth City's first African-American police officer, an event was held in
3 his honor at the Museum of the Albemarle on April 21, 2013; and

4 Whereas, Leander Alton Respass' service on the Elizabeth City Police Department
5 during the Civil Rights era helped to pave the way for the hiring of other minorities in
6 Elizabeth City; Now, therefore,

7 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

8 **SECTION 1.** The House of Representatives honors the life of Leander Alton
9 Respass and commends him for his fortitude in succeeding as Elizabeth City's first
10 African-American police officer.

11 **SECTION 2.** The Principal Clerk shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution
12 to the family of Leander Alton Respass, the Mayor of Elizabeth City, and the Chief of the
13 Elizabeth City Police Department.

14 **SECTION 3.** This resolution is effective upon adoption.