

**RECOMMENDATION IX:
RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR J. BRENT WALKER**



Brent Walker has announced his plan to retire as the executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty in Washington, D.C. at the end of 2016.

Whereas, Brent, both an ordained Baptist minister and a member of the U.S. Supreme Court Bar, leads our nation's anchor organization upholding the historic Baptist principle of religious liberty. With the separation of church and state a hard-won heart issue in Virginia Baptist history, the Baptist Joint Committee has championed religious liberty for eighty years and in behalf of fifteen groups across today's Baptist family, including the Baptist General Association of Virginia. The Baptist Joint Committee has faithfully defended our free exercise of religion and protected us against the establishment of religion by our government.

Whereas, Brent's work of educating and advocating in service of Baptists began in Florida where he earned bachelor and master's degrees from the University of Florida and the doctor of jurisprudence from Stetson University College of Law. After practicing law in Tampa, he entered seminary studies, earned a master of divinity degree from Southern Seminary, and was recognized as that seminary's most outstanding graduate in 1989, while he also served as pastor of Richland Baptist Church in Falmouth, Kentucky. Brent received an honorary doctor of divinity degree from the John Leland Center for Theological Studies (2013).

Whereas, Brent has provided leadership for the Baptist Joint Committee as associate general counsel (1989-1993), general counsel (1993-1999), and executive director since 1999. He has with clarity and impact, spoken and written on key church-state issues in churches, religious gatherings, and the public media.

Therefore Be It Resolved, that we, the elected members of the Baptist General Association of Virginia Executive Board meeting on October 11, 2016 in cooperation with the Committee on Religious Liberty, offer our profound appreciation to Brent Walker for his stellar service to Baptists in Virginia and beyond, and we promise to pray for Brent, his wife Nancy, and their family, and

Be It Further Resolved, that we ask the messengers of the Annual Meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia on November 15, 2016, in Roanoke, Virginia, to demonstrate our thanks for the life and ministry of Brent Walker.