

**No. R-506. House concurrent resolution in appreciation of Representative Ken Atkins of Winooski for offering M&M's<sup>®</sup> chocolate candies at roll call votes.**

(H.C.R.382)

Offered by: Representative French of Randolph

Whereas, the Vermont house of representatives is perhaps the only U.S. state legislative chamber where each roll call vote is accompanied by the distinctive sound of M&M's<sup>®</sup> chocolate candies being poured into a glass dispenser, and

Whereas, this unusual legislative tradition began in 1999, early in the career of Representative Ken Atkins, the member from Winooski, when he brought in M&M's<sup>®</sup> to snack on while sitting on the floor, and

Whereas, as a teacher, Representative Atkins had admonished his students that a treat brought into the classroom should be large enough to share with everyone, and

Whereas, following his own advice, Representative Atkins purchased two large bags of M&M's<sup>®</sup> and a large glass jar for storing the candies, and

Whereas, a new tradition on the floor of the house was born at the start of each roll call vote when Representative Atkins would pour a sufficient quantity of the M&M's<sup>®</sup> into the glass jar and the tinkling sound of their dropping into the jar would attract eager M&M's<sup>®</sup> fans, and

Whereas, in 2005, a new speaker suggested that the presence of the M&M's<sup>®</sup> violated the no-food-on-the-floor policy, and

Whereas, the member from Winooski inquired as to which food group

M&M's<sup>®</sup> belonged, and the speaker did not reply directly but stated the tinkling noise was a distraction, and

Whereas, Representative Atkins offered to place styrofoam inside the jar to muffle the tinkling sound, and the speaker consented to at least temporarily allow the tradition to continue, but to this day it has never been halted, and

Whereas, the *Burlington Free Press* published a picture of Representative Atkins pouring the M&M's<sup>®</sup> into the glass jar with the title "The Candy Man," and word of the *Burlington Free Press* coverage reached the manufacturers of M&M's<sup>®</sup>, who in appreciation sent Representative Atkins a large package containing over 10 pounds of M&M's<sup>®</sup> and a candy dispenser displaying the M&M's<sup>®</sup> insignia, and

Whereas, Representative Atkins estimates that since 1999 "something over 785 pounds of M&M's<sup>®</sup> have been consumed," and

Whereas, this tradition continues, to the delight of the many members who line up for a handful of M&M's<sup>®</sup> before the call of the roll, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly expresses its appreciation for the M&M's<sup>®</sup> chocolate candies offered at each roll call by Representative Ken Atkins of Winooski, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Representative Ken Atkins.