

2020 -- H 7951

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

HOUSE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO
DESIGNATE A STATE FUNERAL FOR THE LAST SURVIVING MEDAL OF HONOR
RECIPIENT FROM WORLD WAR II WHEN SUCH RECIPIENT PASSES AWAY

Introduced By: Representatives Azzinaro, Mattiello, Fellela, Abney, and Serpa

Date Introduced: March 03, 2020

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, World War II, the most widespread war in history, lasted from 1939 until
2 1945; and

3 WHEREAS, The United States entered the war in 1941, following an attack on Pearl
4 Harbor by Japanese fighter planes; and

5 WHEREAS, Over sixteen million Americans served their country and the Allied powers
6 over the course of the war; and

7 WHEREAS, The men and women who served our country in World War II have been
8 collectively called the "greatest generation" for their selfless sacrifice; and

9 WHEREAS, The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that is awarded by
10 the United States government; and

11 WHEREAS, The Medal of Honor is presented by the President of the United States, in
12 the name of Congress; and

13 WHEREAS, The Medal of Honor is only conferred upon members of the United States
14 Armed Forces who distinguished themselves through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the
15 risk of life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in action against an enemy of the
16 United States, while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign
17 force, or while serving with friendly forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing
18 armed force in which the United States was not a belligerent party; and

19 WHEREAS, More than 3,400 Medals of Honor have been awarded to our nation's

1 bravest soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coast guardsmen since the creation of the award in
2 1861; and

3 WHEREAS, The Medal of Honor was awarded to 353 Americans during World War II.
4 Today only 2 of those recipients are still alive; and

5 WHEREAS, These courageous servicemen, Charles H. Coolidge of Tennessee and
6 Hershel Woodrow Williams of West Virginia, risked their lives while serving our country with
7 conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity and therefore deserve the gratitude of the American people;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, The President of the United States has the sole authority to designate a state
10 funeral; and

11 WHEREAS, Historically, the President of the United States has designated state funerals
12 for former presidents, generals, and other extraordinary Americans; and

13 WHEREAS, Our nation is currently divided and yearns for a unifying national event; and

14 WHEREAS, Designating a state funeral when the last surviving World War II Medal of
15 Honor recipient dies would be a wonderful way for the American people to unite and honor all
16 sixteen million soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coast guardsmen who served in our Armed
17 Forces from 1941 to 1945; now, therefore be it

18 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
19 Providence Plantations hereby respectfully urges the President of the United States to designate a
20 state funeral for the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II when such
21 recipient passes away; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
23 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Vice
24 President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the
25 Majority Leader of the United States Senate, and members of the Rhode Island Congressional
26 Delegation.

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