



SJ0029

LRB102 18388 MST 26276 r

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

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

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

7 WHEREAS, Over 16 million Americans served their country
8 and the Allied powers over the course of the war; and

9 WHEREAS, The generation of men and women who served our
10 country in World War II has been called the "greatest
11 generation" for their selfless sacrifice; and

12 WHEREAS, The Medal of Honor is the highest military
13 decoration that is awarded by the United States government;
14 and

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

17 WHEREAS, The Medal of Honor is only conferred upon members
18 of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves
19 through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of

1 life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in action
2 against an enemy of the United States, while engaged in
3 military operations involving conflict with an opposing
4 foreign force, or while serving with friendly forces engaged
5 in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which
6 the United States is not a belligerent party; and

7 WHEREAS, More than 3,400 Medals of Honor have been awarded
8 to our nation's bravest soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines,
9 and coast guardsmen since the creation of the award in 1861;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, The Medal of Honor was awarded to 353 Americans
12 during World War II; and

13 WHEREAS, Only one of those 353 Americans is alive today;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Hershel Woodrow Williams of West Virginia is the
16 last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II; he
17 served his country with conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity
18 at the risk of life and therefore deserves the gratitude of the
19 American people; and

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

1 WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States may pass a
2 Concurrent Resolution to allow an individual to lie in state
3 in the rotunda of the United States Capitol; and

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

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

9 WHEREAS, Designating a state funeral when the last
10 surviving World War II Medal of Honor recipient dies would be a
11 wonderful way for the American people to unite and honor all 16
12 million soldiers, sailors, and airmen who served in our Armed
13 Forces from 1941 to 1945; therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL
15 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF
16 REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING HEREIN, that we urge the President
17 of the United States and the Congress of the United States to
18 take all necessary measures to ensure the last surviving Medal
19 of Honor recipient from World War II be offered a state
20 funeral, including, but not limited to, having the option to
21 lie in state in the rotunda of the United States Capitol; and

1 be it further

2 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
3 delivered to the President of the United States, the President
4 and the Secretary of the United States Senate, the Speaker and
5 the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, the
6 chair of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the chair
7 of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and the Illinois
8 Congressional Delegation.