



SJ0050

LRB101 14489 MST 63673 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 planes;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Over 16 million Americans served their country and
8 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; and

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

16 WHEREAS, The Medal of Honor is only conferred upon members
17 of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves
18 through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of
19 life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in action

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

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

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

11 WHEREAS, Only two of those 353 Americans are alive today;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, Charles H. Coolidge of Tennessee and Hershel
14 Woodrow Williams of West Virginia served their country with
15 conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life and
16 therefore deserve the gratitude of the American people; and

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

19 WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States may pass a
20 Concurrent Resolution to allow an individual to lie in state in

1 the rotunda of the United States Capitol; and

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

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

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

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

21 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be

1 delivered to the President of the United States, the President
2 and the Secretary of the United States Senate, the Speaker and
3 the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, the
4 chair of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the chair
5 of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and the Illinois
6 Congressional Delegation.