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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of United States Marine Corps Major Jeffrey Carl Bland of Oceanside, California, formerly of Galesburg, who passed away on September 19, 2011; and

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WHEREAS, Major Jeffrey Bland was born on January 15, 1974, and grew up in Galesburg; he was the son of Carl and Janet (Winslow) Bland; he married Heather Cook Bland, on April 20, 2002, at St. Vincent DePaul Church in Chicago; and

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WHEREAS, Major Jeffrey Bland enlisted in the United States Marine Corps during his junior year at the University of Illinois; he attended recruit training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, California, and then reported to the School of Infantry for training as a mortarman; after his training, he worked toward completing his bachelor of science in aviation administration at Indiana State University, during which time he rose to the rank of corporal; and

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WHEREAS, In 2000, Major Jeffrey Bland attended Officer Candidates School; he was commissioned as a second lieutenant on October 27, 2001; in 2002, he completed Basic School and proceeded to primary flight training at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Florida; he subsequently completed flight school

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1 and was designated a naval aviator in June of 2004; he was then  
2 directed to report to HMLAT 303 to commence training with the  
3 AH-1W Super Cobra; and

4 WHEREAS, In December of 2004, Major Jeffrey Bland was  
5 assigned to HMLA-369 and deployed with HMM-163 (REIN) with the  
6 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU); he served as the Future  
7 Operations Officer and H-1 NATOPS Officer while supporting  
8 Operation Iraqi Freedom and Exercise Bright Star in Egypt;  
9 after completing his service with the 13th MEU, he returned to  
10 HMLA-267 and was promoted to the rank of captain; he then went  
11 to Okinawa, Japan with HMM-265 (REIN) as part of the 31st MEU  
12 from January of 2007 to December of 2007; during this time, he  
13 participated in Exercise FOAL Eagle, Exercise Ulchi Focus Lens  
14 Korea, the Philippine Bilateral Exercise and Exercise Talisman  
15 Saber in Australia; after a year-long deployment, he returned  
16 to HMLA-267 in December of 2007; he was later selected for an  
17 Individual Augment billet and deployed with the Point of Entry  
18 Transition Team in Iraq from August of 2008 to February of  
19 2009; he then returned to HMLA-267, where he remained until  
20 September of 2009, when he began serving with HMLAT-303; and

21 WHEREAS, Major Jeffrey Bland was the recipient of numerous  
22 personal decorations for his meritorious service, including  
23 the Air Medal-Strike/Flight numeral 4 and the Navy and Marine  
24 Corps Commendation Medal with One Gold Star; and

1           WHEREAS, Major Jeffrey Bland is survived by his loving  
2 wife, Heather; his daughter, Aliana; his parents, Carl and  
3 Janet Bland; and his sisters, Cynthia Marquith, and her  
4 children, Zac and Lindsay Marquith, Christine Ross and her  
5 children, Josh Bland, Matthew Young, and Natalie Ross, and  
6 Julie Griffin; and

7           WHEREAS, Major Jeffrey Bland's patriotism and courage will  
8 be remembered fondly by his loving family, his fellow soldiers,  
9 and the citizens of our grateful nation; therefore, be it

10           RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL  
11 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with  
12 his family and friends, the passing of United States Marine  
13 Corps Major Jeffrey Carl Bland; and be it further

14           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
15 presented to the family of Major Jeffrey Bland as an expression  
16 of our sympathy.