

**First Regular Session
Seventy-first General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. R17-1210.01 Gwynne Middleton x4340

HJR17-1030

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Landgraf and Weissman,

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Fields,

House Committees

Senate Committees

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 17-1030

101 **CONCERNING THE RECOGNITION OF OBSTACLES FACED BY CHILDREN**
102 **WHOSE PARENTS HAVE DIED WHILE SERVING IN THE U.S. ARMED**
103 **FORCES.**

1 WHEREAS, With over 49,000 active-duty and reserve military
2 personnel and over 450,000 military veterans as of 2016, Colorado is, by
3 extension, home to a large military family population; and

4 WHEREAS, The brave men and women who serve our country
5 through the military often place their lives at great risk to ensure our
6 continued freedom as U.S. citizens; and

7 WHEREAS, Sadly, some of these brave members of the U.S.
8 Armed Forces die while in service, leaving behind families with children
9 who must face a future without the support of their parent; and

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

1 WHEREAS, While fallen military service members make the
2 ultimate sacrifice, the long-term impact of this devastating loss for the
3 service member's children is often overlooked; and

4 WHEREAS, According to the Survivor Outreach Services Office
5 at Fort Carson, more than 300 children of fallen service members live in
6 Colorado, and the average age of these children at the time of their
7 parental loss is seven years old; and

8 WHEREAS, A child who suffers the traumatic loss of a parent is
9 three times more likely to face depression and post-traumatic stress
10 disorder, and children who have lost a parent while the parent was serving
11 in the U.S. Armed Forces are at a higher risk for struggles with anxiety,
12 substance abuse, criminal behavior, school underachievement, and
13 suicide; and

14 WHEREAS, The primary support the federal government offers
15 to families of fallen military service members is through dependency and
16 indemnity compensation, a meager monetary supplement that barely
17 covers basics needs for these grieving children who need additional
18 services and supports to cope with their parental loss; and

19 WHEREAS, Several nonprofit organizations have stepped in to
20 offer financial and social services for these bereaved children, such as
21 college scholarship opportunities and brief social outings like week-long
22 camps, but only one nonprofit organization in Colorado, Angels of
23 America's Fallen, formed with the sole purpose to serve children of fallen
24 military service members not only at their time of loss but also throughout
25 their childhood; and

26 WHEREAS, Angels of America's Fallen's goal to stand alongside
27 the children of fallen military service members, empowering and
28 encouraging them on a long-term basis by engaging them in healthy
29 developmental extracurricular activities that help them feel cared for and
30 supported as they find positive outlets for their grief, provides a powerful
31 model that other organizations can emulate to reach many more children
32 whose loss of a military parent during service has created a heartbreaking
33 absence in their lives; now, therefore,

34 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-first*
35 *General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein:*

1 That we, the Colorado General Assembly:

2 (1) Recognize the painful sacrifice made by the children of our
3 state's fallen U.S. Armed Forces members;

4
5 (2) Commend the honorable work nonprofit organizations do to
6 help provide vital social services for children suffering the loss of a
7 military parent; and

8 (3) Encourage fellow Coloradans to remember and support the
9 long-term healing process these bereaved children face as they grow up
10 without the daily love and support of their fallen parent.

11 *Be It Further Resolved*, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent
12 to Joe Lewis, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Angels of America's
13 Fallen; Shelli Lewis, Co-founder, Angels of America's Fallen; Mike
14 Shiels, Chief Operations Officer, Angels of America's Fallen; Frank
15 McCurdy, President, United Veterans Committee of Colorado;
16 Commander-in-Chief of Veterans of Foreign Wars Colorado; Jay Bowen,
17 Department Commander, The American Legion Department of Colorado;
18 the Commanders at Buckley Air Force Base, Peterson Air Force Base,
19 Schriever Air Force Base, Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, Fort
20 Carson, and the United States Air Force Academy; U.S. President Donald
21 Trump; U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis; Governor John
22 Hickenlooper; and the members of Colorado's Congressional delegation.