



HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 17-1030

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Landgraf and Weissman, Arndt, Becker J., Becker K., Beckman, Benavidez, Bridges, Buck, Buckner, Carver, Catlin, Coleman, Covarrubias, Danielson, Esgar, Exum, Foote, Garnett, Ginal, Gray, Hamner, Hansen, Herod, Hooton, Humphrey, Jackson, Kennedy, Kraft-Tharp, Lawrence, Lebsock, Lee, Leonard, Lewis, Liston, Lontine, Lundeen, McKean, McLachlan, Melton, Michaelson Jenet, Mitsch Bush, Navarro, Neville P., Nordberg, Pabon, Pettersen, Rankin, Ransom, Rosenthal, Saine, Salazar, Sias, Singer, Thurlow, Valdez, Van Winkle, Willett, Williams D., Wilson, Winter, Wist, Young, Duran;
also SENATOR(S) Fields and Gardner, Aguilar, Baumgardner, Cooke, Court, Crowder, Donovan, Fenberg, Garcia, Guzman, Hill, Holbert, Jahn, Jones, Kagan, Kefalas, Kerr, Lambert, Lundberg, Marble, Martinez Humenik, Merrifield, Moreno, Neville T., Priola, Scott, Smallwood, Sonnenberg, Tate, Todd, Williams A., Zenzinger, Grantham.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That we, the Colorado General Assembly:

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

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

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

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent to Joe Lewis, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Angels of America's Fallen; Shelli Lewis, Co-founder, Angels of America's Fallen; Mike Shiels, Chief Operations Officer, Angels of America's Fallen; Frank McCurdy, President, United Veterans Committee of Colorado; Commander-in-Chief of Veterans of Foreign Wars Colorado; Jay Bowen, Department Commander, The American Legion Department of Colorado; the Commanders at Buckley Air Force Base, Peterson Air Force Base, Schriever Air Force Base, Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, Fort

Carson, and the United States Air Force Academy; U.S. President Donald Trump; U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis; Governor John Hickenlooper; and the members of Colorado's Congressional delegation.

Crisanta Duran
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
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