

2017 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 196

BY REPRESENTATIVES ARMES, AMEDEE, ANDERS, BACALA, BAGNERIS, BARRAS, BERTHELOT, BILLIOT, BOUIE, BROADWATER, TERRY BROWN, CARMODY, CARPENTER, GARY CARTER, ROBBY CARTER, STEVE CARTER, COUSSAN, COX, CREWS, CROMER, DAVIS, EDMONDS, EMERSON, FALCONER, FOIL, GISCLAIR, GUINN, JIMMY HARRIS, LANCE HARRIS, HAVARD, HAZEL, HILFERTY, HILL, HOWARD, JAMES, JEFFERSON, JENKINS, JOHNSON, JONES, NANCY LANDRY, LEGER, LEOPOLD, LYONS, MACK, MARCELLE, MARINO, MIGUEZ, GREGORY MILLER, MORENO, JAY MORRIS, JIM MORRIS, PEARSON, POPE, PRICE, PYLANT, REYNOLDS, RICHARD, SCHEXNAYDER, SCHRODER, SEABAUGH, STAGNI, THIBAUT, THOMAS, AND WHITE

A RESOLUTION

To establish a committee to honor Gold Star Families and to study best practices in honoring families of fallen members of the United States Armed Forces and to present its findings to the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs and the Senate Select Committee on Veterans Affairs prior to the convening of the 2018 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature.

WHEREAS, no one has sacrificed more for our country and the freedoms that we hold dear than those who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, fallen soldiers are often honored, but their families are rarely recognized for their personal loss and sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, these bereaved families who give the ultimate sacrifice for our country and freedoms are known as "Gold Star Families"; and

WHEREAS, the term "Gold Star" refers to a family member who has lost a loved one while serving in the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, the origin of the term "Gold Star" dates back to World War I when families hung flags bearing a blue star for every immediate family member serving in the United States Armed Forces; the flag would change to a gold star flag after a family member was killed in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, in 1947, congress passed a law authorizing and distributing Gold Star lapel pins for family members of deceased military service members; and

WHEREAS, since 1936, the last Sunday in September is observed as Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day; and

WHEREAS, it should be acknowledged that, in the United States, there are Gold Star Families in every community, including Louisiana, that have made the ultimate sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, the precise number of Gold Star Families is unknown, but there are over six thousand members of the United States Armed Forces that have died in the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana recognizes that Gold Star Families suffer a tremendous loss; without their sacrifice, freedom could not and would not be preserved; and

WHEREAS, the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana also recognizes the importance of and need to honor Louisiana families who have had a loved one killed while serving in the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, thirty-four states have erected Gold Star Family Memorials for public display with many on state capitol grounds.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby create a committee to honor Gold Star Families and to study and determine the best practices for honoring Gold Star Families and families of fallen United States Armed Forces service members without the use of public funding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall be known as the Gold Star Families Honoring Committee and shall be composed as follows:

- (1) The chair of the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs.
- (2) The chair of the Senate Select Committee on Veterans Affairs.
- (3) The secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs or his designee.
- (4) The adjutant general for Louisiana or his designee.
- (5) A member of the Louisiana Military Advisory Council.
- (6) A member of the Military Hall of Fame and Museum.
- (7) A member of the Louisiana Military Family Assistance Board.

(8) The executive director of the National World War II Museum or his designee.

(9) A Gold Star family member appointed by the governor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that staff support for the committee shall be provided from existing personnel within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall prepare and submit a final report that contains its best practices and policy recommendations of the committee to the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs and the Senate Select Committee on Veterans Affairs prior to the convening of the 2018 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the appointing entities named in this Resolution.

---

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES