

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the untimely death of Captain Andrew Michael Pedersen-Keel, and paying tribute to his courageous actions as a member of the United States Army

WHEREAS, It is with feelings of deepest regret that this Legislative Body mourns the untimely death of Captain Andrew Michael Pedersen-Keel, and pays tribute to his courageous actions as a member of the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, Captain Andrew Pedersen-Keel was mortally wounded in Afghanistan on Monday, March 11, 2013; and

WHEREAS, Andrew Pedersen-Keel was born on June 8, 1984, in South Miami, Florida, and grew up in Madison, Connecticut; he graduated from Avon Old Farms High School and entered the United States Army in May of 2006 after earning a Bachelor of Science degree in American Legal Studies from the United States Military Academy and then becoming commissioned as an Infantry Officer; and

WHEREAS, After completing the officer basic course at Fort Benning, Andrew Pedersen-Keel arrived at his first assignment as an Infantry Rifle Platoon Leader with 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division (Light) at Fort Hood, Texas in June of 2007; in June of 2008, he deployed with A Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment in support of OEF IIX and IX as an executive officer; and

WHEREAS, Andrew Pedersen-Keel was selected for a second platoon leadership position in September of 2008 with 3rd Platoon, B Company, where he remained for the remainder of that deployment; as a Platoon Leader in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, he led his platoon in over 150 combat foot patrols and three air assault operations in a platoon area of operations that included five different villages; and

WHEREAS, Upon returning from this deployment Andrew Pedersen-Keel was identified as the new Battalion S-1 Administrative Officer in September of 2009, and he oversaw the manning drawdown of 2-2 Infantry Regiment during 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division's BRAC directed transition from Fort Hood, Texas to Fort Knox, Kentucky; upon completion of the troop drawdown, and formal encasement of the unit colors, he attended Special Forces Assessment and Selection in November 2009; in September of 2010, he graduated from the Maneuver Captains Career Course at Fort Knox and began the Special Forces Qualification Course in November of 2010, where he also studied Pashto during the language phase; and

WHEREAS, In 2011, Andrew Pedersen-Keel completed the Special Forces Qualification Course and was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group where he served as an ODA Commander until his last deployment in August of 2012 as an ODA Commander in Afghanistan; at the time of his death, he was deeply involved in training the Afghan Army; and

WHEREAS, Captain Pedersen-Keel's awards and decorations include the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Expert Infantryman Badge, two Bronze Stars, the Army Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, the NATO Metal, Ranger Tab, Special Forces Tab, Pathfinder Badge, Air Assault Badge, and the Parachutist Badge; he is posthumously receiving a third Bronze Star and a Purple Heart in a ceremony at Fort Bragg; and

WHEREAS, We must never forget the courage with which our men and women served this country, and must recognize that no greater debt is owed than that owed to those who give of their lives for their beloved Nation; and

WHEREAS, Captain Andrew Pedersen-Keel is survived by his fiancée, Celeste Pizza, parents, Helen Pedersen Keiser and Bob Keiser of Madison, Connecticut, and Henry Keel of Pompano Beach, Florida; his sister, Mary,

and many loving, close family and friends; and

WHEREAS, The freedoms and security we cherish as Americans come at a very high price for those serving in the military in times of conflict; it is fitting and proper that we who are the beneficiaries of those who risk their lives, leaving their families behind, express our appreciation and eternal gratitude for their sacrifices and courageous acts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the untimely death of Captain Andrew Michael Pedersen-Keel, and pay tribute to his courageous actions as a member of the United States Army; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Captain Andrew Michael Pedersen-Keel.