

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Chaplain (Captain) Emil J. Kapaun, United States Army, upon the occasion of his posthumous designation as the recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Forces, who have served so valiantly and honorably, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Chaplain (Captain) Emil J. Kapaun, United States Army, upon the occasion of his posthumous designation as the recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor; and

WHEREAS, Emil Kapaun, a United States Army Chaplain from Kansas who faithfully served his country during the Korean War, was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor on April 11, 2013; this meritorious honor was accepted by his nephew Ray Kapaun; and

WHEREAS, The Congressional Medal of Honor is the highest military medal bestowed by the United States; it is awarded for valor in action against an enemy force; and

WHEREAS, Father Kapaun was awarded the medal for his extraordinary heroism while serving with the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division during combat operations against an armed enemy at Unsan, Korea, and as a prisoner of war from November 1-2, 1950; and

WHEREAS, After the Communist invasion of South Korea, Father Kapaun was among the first American troops that hit the beaches and pushed their way north through hard mountains and bitter cold; later on, the Chinese forces entered the war with a massive surprise attack with perhaps 20,000 enemy soldiers approaching a few thousand Americans; and

WHEREAS, In the chaotic battle, Father Kapaun raced between foxholes and beyond the front lines dragging the American wounded to safety; although his commanders ordered an evacuation, he chose to stay, gathering the injured, and tending to their wounds; and

WHEREAS, When the enemy broke through the frontline, hand-to-hand combat ensued and Father Kapaun continued to comfort the dying and wounded; vastly outnumbered, he convinced the Chinese to stop firing and negotiated a peaceful safe surrender, saving countless American lives; and

WHEREAS, Father Kapaun also carried his wounded comrades for miles, as their captors forced them on a death march; in the deep valley of the camps during that winter, soldiers could freeze to death in their sleep, and Father Kapaun would offer them his own clothes; living in extremely harsh conditions, he foraged in nearby fields returning with rice and potatoes, pounded metal into pots and boiled clean water, washed the clothes of the injured along with cleaning their wounds; and

WHEREAS, Never losing his faith, Father Kapaun would slip into the huts of comrades at night to lead fellow prisoners in prayer and administering sacraments; he died on May 23, 1951, in Pyongtong County, North Pyongtan Province, North Korea; and

WHEREAS, The valor honored is that of an American soldier who never fired a gun, but wielded the mighty weapon of love for his comrades which was so pure that he was willing to die so that they might live; and

WHEREAS, The banner of freedom will always wave over this great Nation, the land of the free and the home of the brave; 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 honor Chaplain (Captain) Emil J. Kapaun, United States Army, upon the occasion of his posthumous designation as the recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, and to pay tribute to him for his courageous actions; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Chaplain (Captain) Emil J. Kapaun.