Assembly Resolution No. 1139

BY: M. of A. Reilly

URGING the United States Congress to authorize and direct the issuance of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to veterans of the United States Armed Forces who served in Honduras from 1981 through 1992

WHEREAS, Between 1981 and 1992, members of the United States Armed Forces were deployed to Honduras in support of United States military operations and regional security objectives during a period of significant geopolitical instability in Central America; and

WHEREAS, These operations were conducted in furtherance of United States national security interests, including efforts to deter the expansion of communist influence throughout the region and to stabilize democratic governments in Central America; and

WHEREAS, Service members stationed in Honduras during this period operated under hazardous and austere conditions, often in support of joint and combined operations, training exercises, and contingency missions associated with regional conflict; and

WHEREAS, Between 1981 and 1992, 47 Purple Hearts were awarded to service members for wounds sustained during operations connected to this mission, two Prisoner of War Medals were issued, and four Air Medals were awarded, reflecting the dangerous nature of the service performed; and

WHEREAS, The awarding of these decorations evidences the presence of hostile or imminent-danger conditions consistent with the criteria traditionally associated with expeditionary military operations; and

WHEREAS, In 1996, the United States Congress authorized and the President of the United States approved the issuance of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) to veterans who served in El Salvador between 1981 and 1992, yet veterans who served in Honduras during the same period were not included in that authorization; and

WHEREAS, Many United States military personnel supporting operations in El Salvador were stationed in or operated from Honduras, creating a disparity in recognition among similarly situated service members; and

WHEREAS, National veterans service organizations, including the Veterans of Wars, the American Legion, and the Disabled American Veterans have adopted formal resolutions supporting the issuance of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to veterans who served in Honduras during the specified period; and

WHEREAS, Multiple states have adopted or are actively considering resolutions memorializing Congress to take corrective action, including North Dakota, New Jersey, Missouri, Ohio, and Iowa, with additional

states engaged in review or drafting processes; and

WHEREAS, Equitable recognition of military service strengthens morale among veterans, honors sacrifice, and preserves the integrity of the nation's system of military awards and decorations; and

WHEREAS, The omission of Honduras service from prior authorization has created a longstanding inequity for veterans who served honorably and under hazardous conditions in defense of the interests of the United States; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that action is taken on a national level in order to ensure that the brave service members of our country's armed forces are given the just recognition they deserve for their selfless display of heroism and patriotism in the face of adversity in furtherance of protecting the principals of freedom and democracy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to urge the United States Congress to authorize and direct the issuance of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to veterans of the United States Armed Forces who served in Honduras from 1981 through 1992; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of the Air Force, and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.