

**SENATE  
STATE OF MINNESOTA  
NINETY-FIRST SESSION**

**S.F. No. 524**

(SENATE AUTHORS: BIGHAM, Hawj, Cwodziński and Little)

DATE	D-PG	OFFICIAL STATUS
01/28/2019	178	Introduction and first reading Referred to Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy

1.1 A resolution

1.2 urging the President to designate a state funeral for the last surviving World War II

1.3 Medal of Honor recipient.

1.4 WHEREAS, World War II, the most widespread war in history, lasted from 1939 until 1945;

1.5 and

1.6 WHEREAS, the United States entered the war in 1941, following an attack on Pearl Harbor

1.7 by Japanese fighter planes; and

1.8 WHEREAS, over 16 million Americans served their country and the Allied powers over the

1.9 course of the war; and

1.10 WHEREAS, the generation of men and women who served our country in World War II has

1.11 been called the "greatest generation" for their selfless sacrifice; and

1.12 WHEREAS, the Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that is awarded by the

1.13 United States government; and

1.14 WHEREAS, the Medal of Honor is presented by the President of the United States, in the

1.15 name of Congress; and

1.16 WHEREAS, the Medal of Honor is only conferred upon members of the United States Armed

1.17 Forces who distinguish themselves through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life

1.18 above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in action against an enemy of the United States,

1.19 while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force, or while

1.20 serving with friendly forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which

1.21 the United States is not a belligerent party; and

1.22 WHEREAS, more than 3,400 Medals of Honor have been awarded to our nation's bravest

1.23 soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coast guardsmen since the creation of the award in 1861;

1.24 and

2.1 WHEREAS, the Medal of Honor was awarded to 353 Americans during World War II; and

2.2 WHEREAS, only four of those 353 Americans are alive today; and

2.3 WHEREAS, Charles H. Coolidge of Tennessee, Francis S. Currey of New York, Robert D.  
2.4 Maxwell of Oregon, and Hershel Woodrow Williams of West Virginia all served their country with  
2.5 conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life and therefore deserve the gratitude of the  
2.6 American people; and

2.7 WHEREAS, the President of the United States has the sole authority to designate a state  
2.8 funeral; and

2.9 WHEREAS, historically, the President of the United States has designated state funerals for  
2.10 former presidents, generals, and other extraordinary Americans; and

2.11 WHEREAS, our nation is currently divided and yearns for a unifying national event; and

2.12 WHEREAS, designating a state funeral when the last surviving World War II Medal of Honor  
2.13 recipient dies would be a wonderful way for the American people to unite and honor all 16 million  
2.14 soldiers, sailors, and airmen who served in our Armed Forces from 1941 to 1945; NOW,  
2.15 THEREFORE,

2.16 BE IT RESOLVED by the Legislature of the State of Minnesota that it urges the President  
2.17 of the United States to hereby designate a state funeral for the last surviving World War II Medal  
2.18 of Honor recipient.

2.19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of State of the State of Minnesota is directed  
2.20 to prepare copies of this memorial and transmit them to the President of the United States, the  
2.21 President and the Secretary of the United States Senate, the Speaker and the Clerk of the United  
2.22 States House of Representatives, the chair of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the chair  
2.23 of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and Minnesota's Senators and Representatives in  
2.24 Congress.