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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 784

Offered January 29, 2013

Celebrating the life of Sergeant Aaron Xavier Wittman.

Patrons—Cox, M.K., Albo, Anderson, BaCote, Bell, Richard P., Bell, Robert B., Brink, Bulova, Byron, Carr, Cline, Cole, Comstock, Cosgrove, Cox, J.A., Crockett-Stark, Dance, Dudenhefer, Edmunds, Fariss, Farrell, Filler-Corn, Garrett, Gilbert, Greason, Habeeb, Head, Helsel, Herring, Hester, Hodges, Hope, Howell, A.T., Howell, W.J., Hugo, Iaquinto, Ingram, James, Joannou, Johnson, Jones, Keam, Kilgore, Knight, Kory, Krupicka, Landes, LeMunyon, Lewis, Lingamfelter, Lopez, Loupassi, Marshall, D.W., Marshall, R.G., Massie, May, McClellan, McQuinn, Merricks, Miller, Minchew, Morefield, Morris, Morrissey, O'Bannon, O'Quinn, Orrock, Peace, Plum, Pogge, Poindexter, Purkey, Putney, Ramadan, Ransone, Robinson, Rush, Rust, Scott, E.T., Scott, J.M., Sherwood, Sickles, Spruill, Stolle, Surovell, Tata, Torian, Toscano, Tyler, Villanueva, Ward, Ware, O., Ware, R.L., Watson, Watts, Weber, Wilt, Wright, Yancey and Yost; Senators: Alexander, Barker, Black, Blevins, Carrico, Colgan, Deeds, Ebbin, Edwards, Favola, Garrett, Hanger, Herring, Howell, Locke, Lucas, Marsden, Marsh, Martin, McDougale, McEachin, McWaters, Miller, Newman, Norment, Northam, Obenshain, Petersen, Puckett, Puller, Reeves, Ruff, Saslaw, Smith, Stanley, Stosch, Stuart, Vogel, Wagner, and Watkins

WHEREAS, United States Army Sergeant Aaron Xavier Wittman of Chester became the first United States combat casualty in the War on Terror in 2013 when he died on January 10, 2013, while conducting combat operations in Kyogyani District, Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, Aaron Wittman, the son of Major Duane Wittman, USA (Ret.), and his wife, Carol, was an outstanding athlete at L. C. Bird High School, lettering in wrestling and soccer, and was a member of the Chesterfield Soccer Club; and

WHEREAS, Aaron Wittman followed in his family's proud tradition of study at The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, and service to the country in the United States Armed Forces by enrolling at The Citadel after graduating from high school; and

WHEREAS, while a student, Aaron Wittman joined the South Carolina National Guard and elected to interrupt his studies at The Citadel for two years so that he could deploy with his National Guard Unit to Afghanistan in 2007; and

WHEREAS, Aaron Wittman served for one year with the 218th Brigade Combat Team in Forward Operating Base Shkin, a very hostile and rugged region of Afghanistan, while conducting combat operations and training Afghan Army forces, and earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge before returning to The Citadel to complete his degree, graduating in 2009; and

WHEREAS, a highly trained Soldier fluent in the Pashto language and Airborne qualified, Sergeant Wittman enlisted in the United States Army in 2010 and was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Wittman deployed for his second combat tour to Afghanistan in November 2012; and

WHEREAS, on January 10, 2013, Sergeant Wittman died from injuries sustained returning fire to protect and save the lives of his combat team when his unit, which was on mounted patrol, came under small arms fire; and

WHEREAS, an outstanding Soldier who honorably represented his family, school, and country, Sergeant Wittman earned several awards over the course of his distinguished military career, including a posthumous Purple Heart and Bronze Star; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Wittman's family has served above and beyond the call of duty in the War on Terror, with his father, Major Duane Wittman, USA (Ret.); his brother, Captain Nicholas Wittman, USMC; and his sister, Amber Wittman, a 10-year United States Navy Corpsman, serving combat tours, while his mother, Carol, has demonstrated great courage and fortitude as her loved ones have traveled to perilous places around the world to ensure the safety of their fellow Americans at home; and

WHEREAS, a true American patriot exhibiting the United States Army Values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage and known for his winning smile, contagious sense of humor, and positive attitude, Sergeant Wittman leaves behind to cherish his memory his parents, Duane and Carol; siblings, Nicholas and Amber, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and fellow Soldiers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of a beloved son and brother and courageous patriot, Sergeant Aaron Xavier Wittman; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution

INTRODUCED

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47 for presentation to the family of Sergeant Aaron Xavier Wittman as an expression of the General
48 Assembly's respect for his memory and supreme sacrifice while in service to his country.