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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 327

Offered February 16, 2006

Celebrating the life of Staff Sergeant James Earl Estep.

Patrons—Johnson, Carrico and Kilgore; Senator: Wampler

WHEREAS, United States Army Staff Sergeant James Earl Estep, a resident of Damascus, was killed in the line of duty in Taji, Iraq, on November 11, 2005; and

WHEREAS, James Estep spent his childhood in Southwest Virginia, roaming the mountains with his brothers and sisters and fishing and swimming in Laurel Creek; and

WHEREAS, James Estep attended Holston High School and was a dedicated member of the wrestling and track teams and played drums in the high school band; in his senior year, he moved with his mother to Florida, where he finished high school; and

WHEREAS, after graduation in 1998, James Estep enlisted in the United States Army, something he always said he would do, and because both of his grandfathers fought in World War II, he wished to carry on the family tradition of serving in the military; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Estep served four years at military bases in Germany, and he was serving his second tour in Iraq; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Estep was a member of the 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 101st Airborne Division; and

WHEREAS, when his mother died of cancer in the fall of 2005, Staff Sergeant Estep missed her funeral because his unit was preparing for deployment from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and he left for Iraq on October 1, the week after his mother's death; and

WHEREAS, on November 11, 2005, Staff Sergeant Estep died in the line of duty from injuries sustained in Taji, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee during combat operations; he had only been back in Iraq for a month when the incident occurred; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Estep will be fondly remembered for his tremendous work ethic, his enthusiasm for life, and his great love for his country; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Estep was devoted to his beloved wife and his three beautiful children, ages three, two, and four months, who currently live in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Estep's death is a reminder of the perils faced daily by the thousands of young Americans who serve in our armed forces overseas and whose devotion to duty places them in harm's way; 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 courageous and patriotic Virginian, Staff Sergeant James Earl Estep; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Staff Sergeant James Earl Estep as an expression of the high regard in which his memory is held by the members of the General Assembly and the citizens of Virginia.

INTRODUCED

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