

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 7138

By Gardenhire

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Tennessee Highway Patrol Sergeant Harold Lee Russell II.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their own concerns to ensure our collective freedom and personal safety; in providing for the domestic tranquility of the community as a whole, society recognizes the need for a system of laws; and

WHEREAS, the enforcement of the law has been entrusted to a small number of dedicated individuals who face daily the rigors of human conflict in protecting those whom they so selflessly serve; and

WHEREAS, the people of Tennessee are fortunate to be served by the brave and dedicated law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line while carrying out their essential duties; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Harold Lee Russell II of the Tennessee Highway Patrol (THP) Aviation Division was one such outstanding and heroic public servant, who gave his life on August 23, 2022, while serving his fellow citizens as a helicopter pilot in Marion County; and

WHEREAS, a resident of McKenzie, Sergeant Lee Russell began his law enforcement career in 2007 as a reserve deputy for the Henry County Sheriff's Office while still a student at the University of Tennessee at Martin; and

WHEREAS, he completed an internship with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation before graduating *magna cum laude* with his bachelor's degree, becoming a full-time Henry County Sheriff's Deputy in 2008. The following year, he took to the air in a law enforcement capacity as a part-time pilot while serving on the 24th Judicial District Drug Task Force; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Lee Russell transitioned to the THP in 2010; after graduating from cadet school, he was assigned to Hickman County before transferring to Dickson County in March 2012; and

WHEREAS, he was selected as a THP pilot in May 2012 and was transferred to the Carroll County Airport so that the State would have a helicopter available in that portion of West Tennessee; he was promoted to sergeant on November 12, 2017; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Russell was an exceptionally dedicated member of the THP for twelve years, and his passion for law enforcement and flying put him in a unique position to help find missing persons and criminal suspects and thereby advance investigations across multiple counties; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure with the THP, he received advanced flight training, focusing primarily on Airborne Law Enforcement techniques, and he held an Airline Transport Pilot & Certified Flight Instructor Certificate and two Cessna Jet type ratings; he often gave presentations and instruction on the use of aircraft to THP Strike Teams, Trooper Cadet Schools, THP supervisors, Tennessee Park Rangers, TBI agents, local law enforcement agencies, and citizen organizations; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Russell received multiple awards and recognitions during his career, including the THP Lifesaver Awards, the Governor's Highway Safety Office Hero of the Year Award, and several letters of commendation for multiple lifesaving events and criminal apprehensions; and

WHEREAS, he was also deeply devoted to his family and always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Russell is survived by his wife, his two children, and his mother and father, who is a retired lieutenant of the THP; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Lee Russell leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity, probity, and valor in his public life as a law enforcement officer, compassion and loyalty in private life, and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should remember the too brief yet bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the life of Tennessee Highway Patrol Sergeant Harold Lee Russell II, reflecting fondly upon his character and his commitment to public service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.