

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 7148

By Massey

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Benjamin Matthew Kredich of Knoxville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the tragic passing of Benjamin Matthew Kredich of Knoxville; and

WHEREAS, an extraordinary individual and friend to all, Ben Kredich was an inspiration to his entire community and the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the beloved son of Kimberley Lathrop Kredich and Nicholas Matthew Kredich, Benjamin Mathew Kredich was born on March 13, 1999, at Women and Infant's Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island; and

WHEREAS, Ben Kredich attended Mary Munford Elementary School in Richmond, Virginia, and Sequoyah Elementary School, Vine Middle School, and West High School in Knoxville, graduating with a special education diploma in 2017 and receiving a vocational certificate from the University of Tennessee FUTURE program in 2021; and

WHEREAS, diagnosed with autism at an early age, Ben Kredich was fully included in the regular classroom during his entire K-12 education. His inclusion was the result of constant and relentless advocacy from his family and an incredible group of teachers, aides, and supporters of his educational rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and

WHEREAS, Ben Kredich was a trailblazer and inspiration for many other children with disabilities and their families, achieving the three tenets of IDEA—further education, employment, and independent living; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, he traveled to Nashville and testified before the Senate Education Committee to advocate for what would become known as "Ben's Bill," legislation in support of the STEP UP Scholarship program that would enable students with intellectual disabilities to reside in on-campus housing at the University of Tennessee and other participating colleges; and

WHEREAS, a charismatic young man, Ben was a talented musician who played piano, cello, percussion instruments, ukulele, dulcimer, mandolin, synthesizer, guitar, and bass guitar; he played and sang in ensembles with his brothers and friends and was employed as a pianist at several Knoxville assisted living centers, bringing joy to the residents every time he performed; and

WHEREAS, a tremendous teammate, he swam competitively as a member of the University Swim Club, Tennessee Aquatics, West High School, and the University of Tennessee Vol Swim Club and was a fixture around the University of Tennessee Swimming and Diving Team, coached by his father; several generations of swimmers and divers embraced him as a brother and peer; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his parents, Ben Kredich is survived by his twin brother, Miles; his brother, Coleman; his grandparents, Ann and Arthur Lathrop; his aunt, Deborah Lathrop; his aunts and uncles, Kathryn and John Rohlf and Nathan and Sherri Kredich; and his cousins, Emma Lathrop, Jackson Rohlf, Lucas Rohlf, Laney Rohlf, Hannah Kredich, and Sam Kredich; and

WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his grandparents, Nicholas and Deborah Kredich; his great-grandmother, Ernestine Friedl; his childhood caretaker, Shirley Noe; his aide, companion, and champion, Marsha Partin; and his beloved pets, Scout, Ellington, and Basie; and

WHEREAS, Ben Kredich leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the tragically short but bountiful life of this exceptional young man 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 memory of Benjamin Matthew Kredich, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Kredich.

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.