

1 **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE U.S.S.**

2 **UTAH**

3 2024 GENERAL SESSION

4 STATE OF UTAH

5 **Chief Sponsor: Joseph Elison**

6 Senate Sponsor: Evan J. Vickers

8 **LONG TITLE**

9 **General Description:**

10 This resolution recognizes the history of the U.S.S. Utah.

11 **Highlighted Provisions:**

12 This resolution:

- 13 ▶ highlights the history of the attack on the U.S.S. Utah at Pearl Harbor on December
- 14 7, 1941;
- 15 ▶ declares December 7 as Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day; and
- 16 ▶ encourages municipalities in Utah to pass similar resolutions.

17 **Special Clauses:**

18 None

20 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

21 WHEREAS, on December 7, 1941, the Japanese Navy attacked the U.S. Naval base at

22 Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, leaving 2,403 Americans dead;

23 WHEREAS, the hulls of two battleships - the U.S.S. Arizona and the U.S.S. Utah -

24 remain in the waters of Pearl Harbor as legacies of that tragic day;

25 WHEREAS, the U.S.S. Arizona memorial has millions of visitors each year;

26 WHEREAS, few people visit the memorial honoring the 58 men who lost their lives on

27 the U.S.S. Utah;

28 WHEREAS, at 8:01 A.M. HST, the Japanese struck the U.S.S. Utah by an aerial

29 torpedo that slammed into the port side as crew raised the flag on the fantail;

30 WHEREAS, a second, and possibly third torpedo struck the ship minutes later;
31 WHEREAS, by 8:05 A.M. HST, the ship was lost, and at 8:12 A.M. HST, the U.S.S.
32 Utah capsized after her mooring line snapped;
33 WHEREAS, as the ship was sinking, Chief Water Tender, Peter Tomich, instead of
34 escaping, ordered the crew to get out;
35 WHEREAS, Chief Tomich ignored his own evacuation order and moved from valve to
36 valve, setting the gauge and releasing steam to stabilize and secure the boilers;
37 WHEREAS, if Chief Tomich had not done that, the boilers would have ruptured and
38 exploded and turned the ship into a massive inferno from which no one would escape;
39 WHEREAS, Chief Tomich is among the 58 sailors believed to be entombed inside the
40 U.S.S. Utah;
41 WHEREAS, in 1943, the U.S. Navy commissioned a destroyer escort and named it the
42 U.S.S. Tomich in his honor;
43 WHEREAS, on January 4, 1944, while aboard the U.S.S. Tomich, Chief Tomich was
44 posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor;
45 WHEREAS, Chief Tomich's Congressional Medal of Honor is the only unclaimed
46 Congressional Medal of Honor since the 1880s;
47 WHEREAS, a total of 30 officers and 431 men aboard the U.S.S. Utah survived the
48 attack;
49 WHEREAS, six officers and 52 enlisted men were lost due to being trapped on board
50 or cut down by strafing aircraft;
51 WHEREAS, Melvyn Armour Gandre, a native Utahn who enlisted in the Navy and
52 reported for duty on the U.S.S. Utah in May 1940, was lost aboard the U.S.S. Utah;
53 WHEREAS, after Gandre's death, the U.S.S. Utah's Commanding Officer wrote to
54 Gandre's wife, telling her "while knowing that his life was in great peril, he remained at his
55 post of duty until it was too late to save himself. Our country and our Navy will never forget
56 that glorious act. It is now the duty of all of us to make certain that he did not die in vain...";
57 WHEREAS, for many survivors of the attack, victory was long and difficult. Survivor

58 Bill Hughes recalled: "I was there when it started aboard the Utah and 3 years 8 months and 25
59 days later I was where it ended: in Tokyo Bay.";

60 WHEREAS, entombed within the wreck are the remains of 54 sailors and a baby named
61 Nancy Lynne Wagner;

62 WHEREAS, Nancy Lynne Wagner died two days after her premature birth;

63 WHEREAS, Albert Wagner, Nancy's father, had planned to bury his daughter at sea on
64 the next voyage;

65 WHEREAS, Albert survived the sinking, but his daughter's urn was lost;

66 WHEREAS, the sailors still entombed on the U.S.S. Utah "watch over" her;

67 WHEREAS, President Roosevelt called the attack on Pearl Harbor a "day that will live
68 in infamy";

69 WHEREAS, the infamy of the attack did not translate into a famous legacy for the
70 U.S.S. Utah and the 58 lives lost;

71 WHEREAS, little response from the home front and a lack of effort from the Navy led
72 the U.S.S. Utah into obscurity with stories untold and the title "The Forgotten Ship of Pearl
73 Harbor"; and

74 WHEREAS, now, 82 years after the attack, the time has come to "right the ship,"
75 forgive history, and reset the legacy and memory that will finally bring honor and respect to
76 those that served and died on the U.S.S. Utah once and for all, as well as the state for which she
77 was named:

78 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
79 Governor concurring therein, declare December 7 "Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day" in the
80 state of Utah.

81 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor
82 concurring therein, that the celebration of Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day begin at 8:01 A.M.
83 local time, to commemorate the time the first torpedo hit the U.S.S. Utah.

84 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor
85 concurring therein, encourages every town, city, and county in the state of Utah to follow suit

86 with similar resolutions.

87 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor
88 concurring therein, encourages Utahns and Americans to honor and pay tribute to the fallen
89 sailors by visiting the U.S.S. Utah Memorial in Honolulu, Hawaii.