

**No. R-455.** House concurrent resolution honoring Louis D. Lertola of South Burlington for his outstanding work in securing increased local property tax exemptions for disabled veterans.

(H.C.R.352)

Offered by: Representatives Townsend of Randolph, Acinapura of Brandon, Atkins of Winooski, Bissonnette of Winooski, Botzow of Pownal, Brennan of Colchester, Browning of Arlington, Consejo of Sheldon, Courcelle of Rutland City, Dakin of Chester, Deen of Westminster, Devereux of Mount Holly, Evans of Essex, Fagan of Rutland City, French of Randolph, Gilbert of Fairfax, Head of South Burlington, Helm of Fair Haven, Higley of Lowell, Hubert of Milton, Krebs of South Hero, Lewis of Derby, Macaig of Williston, Martin of Wolcott, McCullough of Williston, Mook of Bennington, Moran of Wardsboro, Mrowicki of Putney, Munger of South Burlington, O'Brien of Richmond, Pearce of Richford, Perley of Enosburgh, Potter of Clarendon, Pugh of South Burlington, Savage of Swanton, Shand of Weathersfield, Shaw of Pittsford, Stevens of Waterbury, Sweaney of Windsor, Till of Jericho, Trieber of Rockingham, Webb of Shelburne, Winters of Williamstown and Wizowaty of Burlington

Whereas, Louis Lertola dedicated four decades (1954–1994) to serving his country in the United States military, including 34 years in the Vermont Army National Guard starting in 1960, and

Whereas, he was appointed as state command sergeant major in the Vermont National Guard, and he was repeatedly honored during his military career, and

Whereas, in 2008, Louis Lertola began a personal campaign to convince Vermont cities and towns to raise their maximum local property tax exemption for veterans who are at least 50 percent disabled from \$10,000 or \$20,000 to the maximum \$40,000 as the legislature had authorized in 32 V.S.A.

§ 3802(11)(C), and

Whereas, this statute allows but does not require each municipality to raise this exemption up to the \$40,000 threshold, and

Whereas, undaunted by the enormity of this challenge, Louis Lertola initiated a tour of the state that in the past four years has taken him to 74 towns, while he has driven approximately 5,000 miles, and

Whereas, community visits were hardly his sole means of persuasion, as he has written about 700 letters to the towns he did not travel to as well as to American Legion and VFW posts and the Disabled American Veterans, and

Whereas, in 2009, 59 towns agreed to raise the exemption level to the maximum amount followed by 44 in 2010, 33 in 2011, and 15 in 2012, and

Whereas, including the towns that had already raised the disabled veteran's property tax exemption to \$40,000 before he started his effort, 219 of 246 towns with a qualifying veteran have now made the change, and 2,147 of the potentially eligible 2,256 veterans (95.2%) now reside in complying towns, and

Whereas, in association with the American Legion and the VFW, Louis Lertola is determined to raise the percentage of towns with the maximum exemption rate to 100 percent, and

Whereas, in 2010, in recognition of his work to enable disabled veterans to remain homeowners, Louis Lertola was presented the Governor's Award for Outstanding Community Service, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors Louis D. Lertola of South Burlington for his outstanding work in securing increased local property tax exemptions for disabled veterans, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Louis Lertola in South Burlington.