

2018 Regular Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 120

BY SENATOR PEACOCK

COMMENDATIONS. Recognizes Preston Sharp for his patriotism and welcomes his visit to Louisiana.

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To recognize and commend Preston Sharp of Redding, California, for his patriotism and to
3 welcome him on his visit to the state of Louisiana.

4 WHEREAS, Preston Sharp is an exceptional young man who has created a patriotic
5 groundswell that has swept over the United States in the last three years; and

6 WHEREAS, called the "Pied Piper of Patriotism", Preston's good deeds have
7 encouraged organizations and individuals to honor veterans, both living and deceased, for
8 their courage and bravery; and

9 WHEREAS, veterans are the few select individuals who have chosen to serve their
10 country, to wear the uniform, and to step into harm's way for the security of our nation; and

11 WHEREAS, the actions of Preston Sharp are a reminder to all of us of our civic
12 responsibility to recognize their sacrifice; and

13 WHEREAS, on Veterans Day, November 11, 2015, Preston placed an American flag
14 and flowers at the gravesite of his grandfather, a United States Navy veteran; Preston was
15 dismayed to see that no other flags were present on the graves of other veterans; and

16 WHEREAS, thus began an odyssey that would take him to all corners of the United
17 States to attend memorial ceremonies for veterans, and to accept an invitation extended by
18 President Donald J. Trump to attend the State of the Union Address on January 30, 2018, at

1 the nation's capitol as a special guest of the president; and

2 WHEREAS, in 2015, at eleven years of age, Preston began in earnest to place flags
3 on every veteran's gravesite in the Redding Memorial Park Cemetery; and

4 WHEREAS, these were the humble beginnings of the "Flag and Flower Challenge",
5 a mission that Preston created to urge individuals across the nation and in foreign countries
6 where United States military service men and women are buried, to seek out the gravesites
7 of veterans, to place a U.S. flag and a flower at each grave, and to speak the veteran's name,
8 and to say out loud, "Thank you for your service"; and

9 WHEREAS, through the use of social media, his efforts to honor veterans began to
10 draw attention to his cause; as Preston Sharp continued his mission, it grew to include other
11 cemeteries in his hometown, in Shasta County, and in each township along California
12 Interstate 5 between Redding and Sacramento; a goal he finally achieved during the summer
13 of 2017; and

14 WHEREAS, Preston's actions and vigorous patriotism became contagious and soon
15 he received support from veterans' groups, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW),
16 that supported his challenge with donations and local participation in memorial ceremonies;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, at first, Preston did odd jobs and sought small donations to raise funds
19 for the purchase of small American flags and weather-proof red carnations; with the creation
20 of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and a GoFundMe platform he has raised \$50,000 with
21 intentions of reaching a goal of \$1 million; and

22 WHEREAS, Preston Sharp is determined to honor veterans in all fifty states and to
23 challenge others to become involved in the Flag and Flower Challenge; he has visited
24 cemeteries in California, Nevada, Oregon, Virginia, and Florida; in particular, national
25 cemeteries that include the Baltimore and Annapolis national cemeteries in Maryland,
26 Arlington, and Quantico, Virginia, and Eagle Point National Cemetery in Oregon; and

27 WHEREAS, in May 2018, the state of Louisiana will be added to his list of states
28 with an invitation extended by the Vietnam Veterans of VFW Post #3798; Preston shall
29 attend Memorial Day ceremonies on May 27, 2018, to be held at the Chalmette National
30 Cemetery, the site of the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812; those veterans to be

1 honored fought during the War of 1812, the Civil War, and the Vietnam War; and

2 WHEREAS, after Preston has placed flags and flowers on those graves in Chalmette,
3 he shall deliver a speech the following day, May 28th, at the World War II Museum in New
4 Orleans to raise awareness of the importance of paying tribute to our nation's military men
5 and women; and

6 WHEREAS, since January 2018, Preston has organized the placement of more than
7 40,000 American flags and weather-resistant red carnations; and

8 WHEREAS, moving forward, his challenge to every American is to take the time to
9 honor veterans with flags and flowers, with a visit to a veterans' home, and with a personal,
10 verbal recognition of any veteran as an offering of thanks for his or her service to this great
11 nation; and

12 WHEREAS, Preston Sharp did not seek acclaim, but recognition from his
13 commitment came to the attention of the United States Veterans Administration senior
14 leadership who shared a similar task of honoring veterans and which has invited Preston to
15 attend a discussion of these issues at its headquarters in Washington, D.C.; and

16 WHEREAS, Preston's vision equates with that of the Veterans Administration
17 mission of caring for those who have 'borne the battle'; Randy Reeves, Under Secretary for
18 Memorial Affairs of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs remarked, "His solemn act of
19 placing an American flag at their gravesites reminds us all of the weight of sacrifice and
20 should serve as an inspiration to youth and adults alike"; and

21 WHEREAS, VA staff welcomed him and volunteered to place flags at Annapolis
22 National Cemetery alongside Preston and his family; and

23 WHEREAS, he has been contacted by teachers and students seeking information so
24 that they may honor veterans in their community; and

25 WHEREAS, First Lady Melania Trump invited Preston to attend the "Be Best"
26 announcement ceremonies at the White House; her Be Best initiative is a platform to address
27 poignant issues that affect youth and to recognize young people across the country who have
28 taken steps to create change; and

29 WHEREAS, Preston also honors living veterans as well by visitation, by conversing
30 with them and listening to their stories, and sometimes by sharing a meal; and

