

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 217

BY REPRESENTATIVES ARMES, ABRAMSON, ADAMS, ANDERS, ARNOLD, BADON, BARRAS, BARROW, BERTHELOT, BILLIOT, STUART BISHOP, WESLEY BISHOP, BOUIE, BROADWATER, BROWN, BURFORD, HENRY BURNS, TIMBURNS, BURRELL, CARMODY, CARTER, CHANEY, CONNICK, COX, CROMER, DANAHAY, DOVE, EDWARDS, FANNIN, FOIL, FRANKLIN, GAINES, GAROFALO, GEYMANN, GISCLAIR, GUILLORY, GUINN, HALL, HARRIS, HARRISON, HAVARD, HAZEL, HENRY, HENSGENS, HILL, HODGES, HOFFMANN, HOLLIS, HONORE, HOWARD, HUNTER, HUVAL, IVEY, JACKSON, JAMES, JEFFERSON, MIKE JOHNSON, ROBERT JOHNSON, JONES, KLECKLEY, LAMBERT, NANCY LANDRY, TERRY LANDRY, LEBAS, LEGER, LEOPOLD, LOPINTO, LORUSSO, MACK, MIGUEZ, MILLER, MONTOUCET, MORENO, JAY MORRIS, JIM MORRIS, NORTON, ORTEGO, OURSO, PEARSON, PIERRE, PONTI, POPE, PRICE, PUGH, PYLANT, REYNOLDS, RICHARD, RITCHIE, ROBIDEAUX, SCHEXNAYDER, SCHRODER, SEABAUGH, SHADOIN, SIMON, SMITH, ST. GERMAIN, STOKES, TALBOT, THIBAUT, THIERRY, WHITNEY, ALFRED WILLIAMS, PATRICK WILLIAMS, WILLMOTT, AND WOODRUFF AND SENATORS ADLEY, ALARIO, ALLAIN, AMEDEE, APPEL, BROOME, BROWN, BUFFINGTON, CHABERT, CLAITOR, CORTEZ, CROWE, DONAHUE, DORSEY-COLOMB, ERDEY, GALLOT, GUILLORY, HEITMEIER, JOHNS, KOSTELKA, LAFLEUR, LONG, MARTINY, MILLS, MORRELL, MORRISH, MURRAY, NEVERS, PEACOCK, PERRY, PETERSON, RISER, GARY SMITH, JOHN SMITH, TARVER, THOMPSON, WALSWORTH, WARD, AND WHITE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request that the Louisiana Congressional delegation send a formal request to the secretary of the United States Army to reconsider the decision denying the family of Staff Sergeant Thomas Florich the right to bury Staff Sergeant Florich at Arlington National Cemetery, a place of sacred honor.

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Thomas Florich of Fairfax County, Virginia, enlisted in the Louisiana National Guard in 2007, as a Black Hawk repairer, served state deployments for Operation Deepwater Horizon and Hurricane Isaac, earning more than one hundred twenty-five flight hours, and was also a graduate of the warrior leader course; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Thomas Florich was a member of A Company, 1st Assault Helicopter Battalion, 244th Aviation Regiment, headquartered in Hammond, and was living in Baton Rouge as he served in the guard while he also attended Louisiana State University; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Florich was twenty-six years old when he and his crew flew out of Eglin Air Force Base near Pensacola, Florida, on March 10, 2015, to engage in a nighttime water insertion operation with Marine Special Operations Command personnel from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, but the aircraft, without warning, suddenly crashed into Santa Rosa Sound and all aboard perished; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Florich was married and leaves behind his wife who is now seven months pregnant with his child, his father, and stepmother; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Florich was in uniform and acting in his capacity as a crew chief and door gunner in a training exercise that took place during adverse weather conditions on that tragic day; unfortunately, the U.S. Army does not include National Guard training exercises in the definition of "active duty" status and has therefore denied his family's request for Staff Sergeant Florich to be buried in ground interment at Arlington National Cemetery due to eligibility requirements regarding internment and inurnment; and

WHEREAS, this Sergeant may not have been in "active duty" status as defined by the U.S. Army, but he was performing his duties and serving his country and should be allowed to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery alongside other servicemen and his grandfather who was a green beret, who also gave his life among many others in an effort to protect this state and country; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana National Guard, Major General Glenn Curtis sent a letter to the secretary of the U.S. Army, John McHugh, asking that the decision be reconsidered.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Congressional delegation to send a formal request that the decision denying the family of Staff Sergeant Thomas Florich the right to bury Staff Sergeant Florich at Arlington National Cemetery, a place of sacred honor, be reconsidered.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of the Resolution be transmitted to each member of the Louisiana Congressional delegation.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE