

By: Senator(s) Tate, Blackwell, McLendon,  
Parker, Hickman, McCaughn, Suber, Seymour,  
Thomas

To: Rules

## SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 55

1 A RESOLUTION REMEMBERING THE GALLANT SERVICE AND COMMENDING  
2 THE LIFE OF JAMES HENRY TAYLOR OF OLIVE BRANCH, MISSISSIPPI, WHO  
3 WAS LOST IN ACTION DURING THE VIETNAM WAR WHILE ON A SECRET  
4 MISSION.

5 WHEREAS, on March 16, 1962, Flying Tiger Line Flight 739 was  
6 on a secret mission, disappeared, and was never found.  
7 Tragically, all those on board, including 93 United States Army  
8 soldiers and 11 civilian crew members, including James Henry  
9 Taylor of Olive Branch, Mississippi, were lost; and

10 WHEREAS, very little is known about what happened to the  
11 plane and its passengers, and due to the mysterious circumstances  
12 surrounding the mission, the names of those lost have not yet been  
13 added to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.; and

14 WHEREAS, recently, many families and loved ones of these  
15 heroes gathered in Columbia Falls, Maine, where national nonprofit  
16 Wreaths Across America (WAA) is based, to be present for the  
17 unveiling of a new monument dedicated to the men who were lost.  
18 The new monument, which is made entirely of granite and stands  
19 8-feet tall, 9.5-feet wide and 4-feet deep at its base, displays



20 the engraving of each of the 93 Army soldiers aboard, as well as  
21 the names of the 11 flight crew members, many of whom were  
22 veterans themselves; and

23 WHEREAS, the inscription on the stone reads: "Missing in  
24 action; Presumed dead. Flying Tiger Line Flight 739 went missing  
25 on March 16, 1962, with 93 U.S. Army soldiers on board. These men  
26 and their flight crew perished in what would become one of the  
27 biggest aviation mysteries out of the Vietnam War era. THE NAMES  
28 OF THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES AND WHO REMAIN MISSING ARE INSCRIBED  
29 HERE SO THAT THEY WILL BE SAID ALOUD AND THEIR MEMORY WILL LIVE  
30 ON"; and

31 WHEREAS, the land on which the monument was erected was  
32 donated by WAA Founder Morrill Worcester, and is located on the  
33 balsam tip land where brush is harvested each year to make the  
34 veterans wreaths placed on the headstones of our nation's heroes  
35 on National Wreaths Across America Day; and

36 WHEREAS, during the ceremony, the name of each person aboard  
37 Flying Tiger Line Flight 739 was honored as it was read aloud, and  
38 there have been renewed efforts to add the names of the men who  
39 perished on Flight 739 to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall as an  
40 everlasting tribute to their sacrifice and service; and

41 WHEREAS, Dianna Crumpler was among the family members who  
42 attended the unveiling of the monument, as her brother, James  
43 Henry Taylor, was on Flying Tiger Line Flight 739, and Dianna,



44 who, along with her brother, Curtis Taylor, was 17 years old when  
45 the flight disappeared, shared James Henry Taylor's story; and

46 WHEREAS, James Henry Taylor was born in Memphis, Tennessee,  
47 on January 17, 1938, to James Walter and Helen Taylor of Olive  
48 Branch, Mississippi, and he attended college at Northwest  
49 Mississippi Junior College, now known as Northwest Community  
50 College, in Senatobia, Mississippi; and

51 WHEREAS, James was very popular in school, and his friends  
52 called him "Tater," and everyone who knew him remembered that he  
53 was always smiling or laughing; and

54 WHEREAS, during his tenure at Northwest, he met and fell in  
55 love with Deanna Brown from Crenshaw, Mississippi. The duo was  
56 united in holy matrimony after he graduated from Northwest; and

57 WHEREAS, after his marriage and graduation from Northwest,  
58 James attended Southwest College in Memphis, now known as Rhodes  
59 College, and was pursuing a career as a pastor in the Presbyterian  
60 Church. He was serving as the youth director at his home church,  
61 Bethel Presbyterian Church, which is the same church his sister  
62 still attends in Olive Branch. The pastor at the time took him  
63 under his wing and loved him like his own son, mentoring him for  
64 the ministry; and

65 WHEREAS, after he finished two years of school, his wife,  
66 Dee, was pregnant with their first child, Merry Tamah  
67 Taylor-Mattix, so James decided the best way to take care of his  
68 family was to enlist in the Army; and



69 WHEREAS, James spent two years in the Army when Dee became  
70 pregnant with their second child. Before Jamie Ann was born,  
71 James re-enlisted in order to finish his next three years in the  
72 Army and also study to be a minister while in the service; and

73 WHEREAS, James had a month off between his two terms of  
74 service, so he brought his family back to Olive Branch to live  
75 while he served, or until he was stationed at a permanent base.  
76 However, the mission to Vietnam, Tiger Line Flight 739 was his  
77 first deployment; and

78 WHEREAS, James preached a sermon about going to Heaven the  
79 Sunday before he left on that final flight. The name of the  
80 sermon was "The odds against going to Heaven are 6 to 1," which  
81 was named after a popular song in the early 1960s; and

82 WHEREAS, the Tiger Line Flight 739 mission was a very secret  
83 mission, so secret that the men were told they could not bring  
84 items that identified them in any way, so they had to leave  
85 wedding rings, pictures, dog tags, and everything at home; and

86 WHEREAS, many of the soldiers on Tiger Line Flight 739 told  
87 their families that they would likely not be returning alive, but  
88 James's family did not understand the intense danger of the  
89 mission; and

90 WHEREAS, the flight left on March 16, 1962, and was lost from  
91 radar between Guam and the Philippines or Saigon, but James's  
92 sister knows the flight made it to Guam because he stopped long  
93 enough while they were refueling to drop a postcard to his wife to



94 tell her that he loved her and missed her and to give his  
95 location, but this was the last time anyone ever heard from him;  
96 and

97 WHEREAS, the largest search ever made in the Pacific at that  
98 time was launched with several countries joining in the search,  
99 but nothing, not even a shred of the plane, was found by anyone.  
100 After eight days, the search was called off, and the hearts of the  
101 family members of all those on board were shattered; and

102 WHEREAS, sadly, after James left, his daughter, Jamie Ann,  
103 was born with a heart defect and lived for only 12 days. His  
104 daughter, Merry, was two years old when her father departed on  
105 Flight 739, and she has said that it was difficult growing up  
106 without a father, and not knowing what happened to him added a  
107 layer of grief and lack of closure; and

108 WHEREAS, Merry also attended the dedication of the monument  
109 in Maine, and being there among the sons and daughters of other  
110 parents who perished, she realized she wasn't alone, and to have  
111 her father and the fathers of others honored in such a meaningful  
112 way was healing for her; and

113 WHEREAS, James Henry Taylor's unflinching courage and gallant  
114 self-sacrifice reflect lasting glory upon himself and uphold the  
115 noble traditions of the infantry and the military service; and

116 WHEREAS, James Henry Taylor was a loving husband and father  
117 who is counted among America's heroes, committed to our nation's  
118 safety and security. To a country, a fallen soldier means a



119 national loss; to a community, a fallen soldier means a true hero;  
120 to a parent, a fallen soldier means a son who won't be coming  
121 home. Mississippians understand the costs of conflict, because we  
122 have paid them in the past, and it is with great pride and  
123 humility that we recognize the heroic action of this great  
124 American and Mississippian, who was the guardian of civilization  
125 as we know it today:

126       NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
127 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby remember the gallant service and  
128 commend the life of James Henry Taylor of Olive Branch,  
129 Mississippi, who was lost in action in the Vietnam Conflict on  
130 March 16, 1962, and extend the thoughts and prayers of the Senate  
131 to his surviving family and our sorrow on his passing.

132       BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
133 the surviving family of James Henry Taylor and made available to  
134 the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

