

By: Representatives Patterson, Bennett,  
DeLano, Eure, Guice, Haney, Zuber, Henley

To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 57

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING  
2 JEREMIAH "JERRY" JOSEPH O'KEEFE UPON RECEIVING THE U.S.  
3 CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL FOR HIS HEROIC ACTIONS DURING WORLD WAR  
4 II.

5 WHEREAS, on June 5, 2015, Jeremiah "Jerry" Joseph O'Keefe,  
6 was presented with the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal during a  
7 celebration of the 150th anniversary of Bradford-O'Keefe Funeral  
8 Home in honor of his service as an ace fighter pilot during World  
9 War II; and

10 WHEREAS, every U.S. Congressional Gold Medal is unique to the  
11 recipient, and Mr. O'Keefe received one that is reserved only for  
12 service members who have achieved the title of ace through the  
13 destruction of five or more enemy aircraft in aerial combat; and

14 WHEREAS, Mr. O'Keefe was one of the youngest Americans at age  
15 21 to become an ace fighter pilot, earning the designation for  
16 shooting down seven enemy planes; and

17 WHEREAS, at 92 years of age, Mr. O'Keefe is one of about 77  
18 pilots from the "Greatest Generation" still living who are



19 eligible to receive the medal, which is Congress' highest civilian  
20 award; and

21 WHEREAS, following his sense of duty and patriotism, Mr.  
22 O'Keefe enlisted in the United States Navy following the attack on  
23 Pearl Harbor, and within weeks, the 19-year-old was at the  
24 controls of a training aircraft in flight school at Pensacola  
25 Naval Air Station; and

26 WHEREAS, as part of Marine Fighter Squadron VMF-323, the  
27 "Death Rattlers," Mr. O'Keefe was involved in efforts to intercept  
28 incoming kamikaze suicide bombers flying from Japan to attack the  
29 United States fleet offshore, and it was during one of the  
30 missions that he became a so-called "Ace in a day"; and

31 WHEREAS, after World War II, Mr. O'Keefe returned home,  
32 finished his degree and became a successful businessman and  
33 politician, serving in the Mississippi House of Representatives  
34 and as the Mayor of Biloxi; and

35 WHEREAS, in addition to the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal,  
36 Mr. O'Keefe has also received several other medals for his  
37 achievements, including the Navy Cross, the Distinguished Flying  
38 Cross, the Air Medal and the Gold Star; and

39 WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to acknowledge  
40 an individual of the esteemed caliber as that of Jerry O'Keefe,  
41 whose heroic and admirable actions during World War II, in  
42 addition to his public service to the State of Mississippi, brings  
43 honor to every citizen of this state:



44           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
45 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING  
46 THEREIN, That we do hereby commend and congratulate Jerry O'Keefe  
47 upon receiving the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal for his heroic  
48 actions during World War II and express our sincere gratitude for  
49 his service.

50           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
51 furnished to Mr. Jeremiah "Jerry" Joseph O'Keefe, the Biloxi City  
52 Council and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

