

## 2017-J3072

Senate Resolution No. 3072

BY: Senator KENNEDY

HONORING Sergeant Joshua Geartz upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the people of the State of New York to recognize and acknowledge those within our midst who have made significant contributions to the quality of life therein; and

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have served so valiantly and honorably in wars in which this country's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace in peace-time, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Sergeant Joshua Geartz upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, Upon being hit by an improvised explosive device (IED) in September of 2003, Sergeant Joshua Geartz received an honorable discharge after serving in the United States Army as a Military Police Officer since 1999; and

WHEREAS, For 11 years, Sergeant Joshua Geartz battled numerous mental and physical issues, leaving him feeling like a burden on his family; knowing how difficult it is after coming home from war due to personal experiences, he wanted to help others through their own problems; and

WHEREAS, In October of 2015, Sergeant Joshua Geartz co-wrote the song "Still on the Ride" with Nashville folk artist Mary Gauthier while on a retreat with SongwritingWith:Soldiers, a non-profit organization which hosts retreats to pair soldiers with songwriters who help translate their stories into music; and

WHEREAS, "Still on the Ride" centers around the idea that dead soldiers become guardian angels, helping those wrestling with survivor's guilt; and

WHEREAS, To support his fellow veterans, Sergeant Joshua Geartz recently finished 422For22, a four-week, 422-mile trek from Angola, Indiana, back to Tonawanda, New York, going for 20-mile spurts and switching between two electric wheelchairs throughout the trip to raise funds with Team Red, White & Blue, a veteran community group and SongwritingWith:Soldiers; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Joshua Geartz's favorite moments along the trip were when people stopped him and he was able to explain his cause and educate people about the frequency of suicide among veterans, which on average is approximately 22 veterans each day; and

WHEREAS, According to Sergeant Joshua Geartz, in the military, you are trained to react; if you are feeling something, you do something about it; in the civilian world, you have to respond, not react; this ride for this cause was his response; and

WHEREAS, Residents of this great State must never forget the courage with which these men and women served their country, and must recognize that no greater debt is owed than that owed to those who gave their lives for their beloved Nation and to those who continue to be missing in action; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad, Sergeant Joshua Geartz demonstrated his love for his country and his fellow veterans and merits forevermore, the highest respect of his State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, With him throughout have been his wife, Lisa, and their two sons, Nash and Silas, who have all shown him love and support and rejoice in his many achievements; and

WHEREAS, Our Nation's veterans deserve to be recognized, commended and thanked by the people of the State of New York for their service and for their dedication to their communities, their State and their Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Sergeant Joshua Geartz upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Sergeant Joshua Geartz.