

2015-J5795

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending Joseph Forte upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by the Kingston Veterans Association on June 1, 2016

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 peacetime, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to commend those who have served in times of active conflict, as well as those who have served in times of peace; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Joseph Forte upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by the Kingston Veterans Association, to be celebrated at Testimonial Affair on Wednesday, June 1, 2016, at the VFW Post No. 1386, Kingston, New York; and

WHEREAS, At the young age of 13, Joseph Forte, affectionately known as Joe, was recruited to play Taps at military funerals and memorial services with the American Legion Post Color Guard; he proudly played the famous bugle call at the end of all military funerals until June of 1945, when he enlisted in the United States Army at the age of sixteen; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his military career, he proudly served his country as a member of the Sixth Air Force as an aerial gunner in the Panama Canal Zone; in the summer of 1946, it was discovered he was underage and was honorably discharged a few months later with the rank of Sergeant; and

WHEREAS, In February of 1947, Joseph Forte re-enlisted at West Point Military Academy for service with the United States Military Academy

(USMA) Band; in August of 1950, while being processed to serve in Korea as a rifleman in the 27th Infantry of the 25th Division, it was determined that he was serving under a medical waiver which resulted in his being returned to West Point with the USMA Band; and

WHEREAS, In November of 1947, this talented musician was invited to play Echo Taps to Master Sergeant Newell Fisher at a ceremony for the returning dead of World War II in Central Park, New York City; in October of 1948, he played Taps at the interment of the only Medal of Honor recipient of the City of Kingston; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Joseph Forte played Taps at the interment of Davit "Mickey" Marcus, a West Point graduate who was Israel's first Defense Minister; in January of 1991, he was invited to play Taps at the interment of Past National Commander of The American Legion, The Honorable Hamilton Fish, Sr.; and

WHEREAS, For over 26 years, Joseph Forte played in the West Point Band; in April of 1973, he officially retired from the United States Army with the title of Master Sergeant with over 27 years of distinguished service; and

WHEREAS, This year, Joseph Forte will be inducted into the 2016 New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his tenure, this honorable veteran participated in numerous Cadet and West Point activities such as parades, concerts, football games, and military funerals; he was privileged to march in seven Presidential Inaugural Parades in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, For several months, Joseph Forte played Taps at Fort Myer in Virginia with a ceremonial group in Arlington National Cemetery, and was a bugler with the Military Honor Guard at the Pine Lawn National Cemetery in Farmingdale, Long Island; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Joseph Forte served as Advisor to Post 23 Explorer Scouts of America, and was a highly skilled shooter on both the small bore and high power rifle teams, and was the Post Rifle Champion

for two years; as an expert, he held the position of Coach Instructor for the West Point Boy's and Girl's NRA Rifle Club; and WHEREAS, Immediately after joining Kingston Post No. 150, The American Legion, Joseph Forte enlisted in the Color Guard, where he served as Vice Commander for two years, Commander for two consecutive terms, Trustee for five years, and Adjutant for three years, as well as Adjutant-Treasurer for more than 15 years; and

WHEREAS, Along with his work with the American Legion, Joseph Forte has held numerous leadership positions in the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Department of New York; for the past two decades he has served as Bugler, Commander of Chapter 156 for two years, and Adjutant-Treasurer for two years; for his dedication and faithful services to the DAV he was awarded Life Member status; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Forte is also active in his local VFW Post No. 1386 where he has been the Bugler in its Military Honor Guard for more than 25 years; throughout his tenure, he has been actively involved in just about every activity sponsored by the Post; for his exceptional devotion, he was made a Life Member; and

WHEREAS, Moreover, Joseph Forte was named a Life Member of his local Vietnam Veterans of America organization; in recognition of his extraordinary and tireless efforts to serve his fellow veterans, the New York State Marine Corps League honored him by bestowing upon him the title of Honorary Member; he was also the co-Chairman of his county's Vietnam Memorial Committee which raised funds to erect a monument to the Vietnam Veterans of Ulster County; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Forte personally raised money for that project by walking the area highways looking for discarded cans and bottles that he redeemed to support such a worthy public effort; additionally, he participated in special committees of a Restoration Program created by his American Legion Post to restore the World War II Community Monuments throughout his city; and

WHEREAS, This exceptional man took it upon himself to supervise the

restoration of a specific cemetery in Kingston where there are over 25 black veterans interred, mostly from the Civil War period; he was publicly honored by the Preservation League of the State of New York with a Testimonial Dinner at the Bear Mountain Inn for his exceptional efforts and accomplishments in bringing that overgrown cemetery back to

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a place of beauty and respect; and

WHEREAS, In 1995, the Kingston Veterans Association again honored Joseph Forte for his many years of dedication to the veteran population of his county by selecting him as its Veteran of the Year; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Forte further helped his fellow veterans and their widows who had not switched over to the Veterans Alternative Tax Exemption on their real property, and took complete charge of the hospital related equipment, controlled by the Kingston Legion Post and made needed equipment available to those in need and he personally delivered the same to their residence; and

WHEREAS, A true patriot, Joseph Forte was instrumental in seeing that American Flags were donated to area schools and to homes with empty flagpoles as part of the Legion's Americanism Programs; he was also responsible for procuring a generous donation from the Kingston Legion Post to the Kingston Hospital for the purchase of a Dialysis Machine; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his illustrious career, Joseph Forte has honored every veterans organization by his invitation to play Taps at the Memo-

rial Service at the Franklin D. Roosevelt grave in Hyde Park, New York, and was also invited by the United States Department of the Interior to do the same at the Annual Memorial Service at the Roosevelt Estate honoring POWs and MIAs; and

WHEREAS, As an outstanding member of his community, Joseph Forte has graciously donated his time and energy to not only serving his fellow veterans and their families, but the Ulster County population as a

whole; 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 their patriotism both at home and abroad, these men and women demonstrated their love for their country and merit forevermore, the highest respect of their State and Nation; 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 commend Joseph Forte upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by the Kingston Veterans Association on June 1, 2016; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Joseph Forte.