

## 2021-J361

Senate Resolution No. 361

BY: Senator GRIFFO

COMMENDING Joseph Keith Wheeler posthumously 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, 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, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Joseph Keith Wheeler posthumously 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, A resident of West Utica, New York, Joseph Keith Wheeler was the son of Charles and Mary Wheeler; he had one brother, Charles, and one sister, Karen; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Keith Wheeler enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in February of 1967; during his basic training in South Carolina, he was cited for rifle marksmanship; and

WHEREAS, Deployed to Vietnam in December of 1967, Joseph Keith

Wheeler proudly served his country as a member of the First Air Wing Command; he was assigned as an airborne machine gunner and achieved the esteemed rank of Private First Class; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Keith Wheeler steadfastly protected American air convoys, bringing troops and supplies to the Marine Base Camp at Khe Sanh, where an intense enemy attack ensued, and an urgent call went out for volunteers to relieve his fellow Marines; and

WHEREAS, Without hesitation or regard for his own safety, this brave Marine immediately volunteered and was airlifted to Khe Sanh, where he was killed in action on March 31, 1968, at just 18 years old; he is buried in Crown Hill Memorial Park in Utica, New York; 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, Joseph Keith Wheeler demonstrated his love for his country and merits forevermore the highest respect of his 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 Keith Wheeler posthumously 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 the family of Joseph Keith Wheeler.