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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 305 Session of  
2007

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INTRODUCED BY RAPP, FAIRCHILD, MELIO, CAUSER, ADOLPH, BAKER, BEAR, BENNINGHOFF, BOBACK, BOYD, BRENNAN, BUXTON, COSTA, CREIGHTON, CUTLER, ELLIS, J. EVANS, FLECK, GEIST, GEORGE, GODSHALL, GOODMAN, GRELL, HARHAI, HARPER, HERSHEY, HESS, KAUFFMAN, M. KELLER, KENNEY, KORTZ, LENTZ, MAJOR, MANTZ, MARKOSEK, MARSHALL, McCALL, McILHATTAN, MENSCH, MILLARD, R. MILLER, MOUL, MOYER, MUSTIO, NAILOR, O'NEILL, PALLONE, PASHINSKI, PAYNE, PERRY, PERZEL, PICKETT, QUINN, RAYMOND, REED, REICHLEY, ROAE, ROHRER, RUBLEY, SAINATO, SANTONI, SAYLOR, SCAVELLO, SIPTROTH, SONNEY, STERN, R. STEVENSON, SURRA, VULAKOVICH, WOJNAROSKI, YOUNGBLOOD AND PETRONE, MAY 25, 2007

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
MAY 25, 2007

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A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and honoring Staff Sergeant John Gary Gertsch,  
2 posthumous recipient of the Medal of Honor.

3 WHEREAS, The Medal of Honor, the highest award for valor, is  
4 bestowed upon members of the armed forces who have distinguished  
5 themselves above and beyond the call of duty; and

6 WHEREAS, Approximately 3,460 individuals have been awarded  
7 the Medal of Honor since the Civil War; and

8 WHEREAS, Only 377 Pennsylvanians have received the Medal of  
9 Honor and, under Pennsylvania law, have been remembered with a  
10 commemorative marker in Soldiers' Grove; and

11 WHEREAS, Staff Sgt. Gertsch, an honorable and distinguished  
12 Pennsylvanian from Warren County, was posthumously awarded the

1 Medal of Honor for valor, in addition to receiving numerous  
2 other meritorious awards during his extraordinary military  
3 career; and

4 WHEREAS, Staff Sgt. Gertsch became a platoon leader in 1969  
5 while serving in the A Shau Valley in the Republic of Vietnam  
6 with Company E, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry, 101st Airborne  
7 Division; and

8 WHEREAS, While on a mission to seize a strongly defended  
9 enemy position, Staff Sgt. Gertsch's platoon leader lay  
10 seriously wounded and exposed to intense enemy fire and was  
11 rescued by Staff Sgt. Gertsch, who dragged him to safety while  
12 forsaking his own life; and

13 WHEREAS, A small element of Staff Sgt. Gertsch's unit was  
14 attacked while on a reconnaissance mission, and Staff Sgt.  
15 Gertsch advanced, firing on the enemy, forcing retreat and  
16 allowing his platoon to recover two wounded men who were exposed  
17 to heavy enemy fire; and

18 WHEREAS, Staff Sgt. Gertsch was seriously wounded during an  
19 onslaught of automatic weapons, grenade and rocket fire but  
20 continued to command his platoon despite the painful wound; and

21 WHEREAS, While Staff Sgt. Gertsch continued to move under  
22 fire and encourage his men, he sighted an aidman treating a  
23 wounded officer from an adjacent unit, and realizing that those  
24 men were in imminent danger of being killed, he rushed forward  
25 and positioned himself between them and the enemy; and

26 WHEREAS, On July 19, 1969, Sergeant Gertsch was mortally  
27 wounded by enemy fire while providing cover as the wounded  
28 officer was being moved to safety; therefore be it

29 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize that  
30 without Staff Sergeant John Gary Gertsch's courage, ability to

1 inspire others, selfless sacrifice and profound concern for the  
2 welfare of his fellow soldiers, the loss of life in his unit  
3 would have been significantly greater; and be it further

4       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives honor Staff Sgt.  
5 Gertsch's conspicuous gallantry, extraordinary heroism and  
6 intrepid leadership at the cost of his own life and above the  
7 call of duty; and be it further

8       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives duly recognize  
9 Staff Sgt. Gertsch's heroism and sacrifice, in keeping with the  
10 highest traditions of the United States Army; and be it further

11       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives pay tribute to  
12 Staff Sgt. Gertsch, posthumous recipient of the Medal of Honor  
13 for his brave actions in combat in 1969, who is officially  
14 granted his rightful place of honor in the Medal of Honor  
15 Memorial at Soldiers' Grove on the grounds of the State Capitol  
16 of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and be it further

17       RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to  
18 the family of Staff Sergeant John Gary Gertsch.