

2003 SESSION

ENGROSSED

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 481

Offered February 12, 2003

On the death of Lieutenant Stephen Nicklous Benson.

Patrons—Stolle, Blevins, Rerras and Wagner; Delegates: Drake, McDonnell, Purkey, Suit, Tata, Wardrup and Welch

WHEREAS, Stephen Nicklous "Nick" Benson, a lieutenant in the United States Navy, was one of four naval aviators killed on October 18, 2002, off the California coast when two F/A-18F Super Hornets collided during aerial maneuvers; and

WHEREAS, a native of Virginia Beach and a third-generation military man, Nick Benson was the son of retired Navy Captain Eric Benson and Barbara Benson and the brother of Katherine Benson Naehar and Marine Corps Captain Garrett Benson; and

WHEREAS, Captain Eric Benson is the former commander of Oceana Naval Air Station and Fighter Squadron 41, to which Nick Benson later belonged as a naval flight officer in an F-14 Tomcat; and

WHEREAS, Nick Benson was a graduate of First Colonial High School in Virginia Beach, where he played football, and a 1998 graduate of Oklahoma State University; and

WHEREAS, commissioned through the Officer Candidate School program, Nick Benson earned his wings and was assigned to Oceana's Fighter Squadron 101, where he learned to fly in the F-14; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, Nick Benson was deployed aboard the aircraft carrier Enterprise, and his squadron was among the first combat units to fly into Afghanistan in the war against terrorism; and

WHEREAS, during one of his combat missions in Afghanistan, Nick Benson was credited with destroying a ground control aircraft radar van with two laser-guided bombs, an act for which he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal by the Secretary of the Navy; and

WHEREAS, the tragic and untimely death of Lieutenant Stephen Nicklous Benson is a reminder of the hazards faced on a daily basis by the courageous young men and women of our armed forces; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Lieutenant Stephen Nicklous Benson; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Lieutenant Stephen Nicklous Benson as an expression of the esteem in which his memory is held by the members of the General Assembly.

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