

House Resolution 551

By: Representatives Birdsong of the 123rd, Murphy of the 18th, Walker of the 141st, Smith of the 19th, Floyd of the 138th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Expressing regret at the loss of 21 National Guardsmen; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, 21 National Guardsmen were tragically killed when their twin engine C-23
3 Sherpa crashed in a field near Unadilla, Georgia, during a heavy rain on Saturday morning,
4 March 3, 2001; and Georgians mourn the loss for the families of this calamity; and

5 WHEREAS, three Florida National Guard members of the 171st Aviation Battalion of the
6 Army Air National Guard based in Lakeland served as the crew: Chief Warrant Officer John
7 Duce, pilot; Chief Warrant Officer Eric Larson, co-pilot; and Staff Sgt. Robert Ward, flight
8 engineer; and

9 WHEREAS, 18 passengers who were all members of the 203rd Red Horse Unit of the
10 Virginia Air National Guard were members of a Virginia based military construction and
11 engineering crew on a routine training mission; and

12 WHEREAS, knowingly engaging in treacherous and perilous duties on behalf of our nation
13 and its citizens, these very capable, dedicated, civilian military personnel bravely faced an
14 extraordinary and inescapable event in their tragic final flight, and the loss of their lives
15 leaves an unfillable void in their families and their service shall be remembered forever:
16 Master Sgt. James Beninati, Staff Sgt. Paul J. Blancato, Tech Sgt. Ernest Blawas, Staff Sgt.
17 Andrew H. Bridges, Master Sgt. Eric Bulman, Staff Sgt. Paul Cramer, Tech Sgt. Michael
18 East, Staff Sgt. Ronald Elkin, Staff Sgt. James Ferguson, Staff Sgt. Randy Johnson, Senior
19 Airman Matthew Kidd, Master Sgt. Michael Lane, Tech Sgt. Edwin Richardson, Tech Sgt.
20 Dean Shelby, Staff Sgt. John Sincavage, Staff Sgt. Gregory Skurupey, Staff Sgt. Richard
21 Summerell, and Maj. Frederick Watkins.

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
23 this body expresses deep regret at the loss of 21 National Guardsmen on March 3, 2001, and
24 conveys its sincerest sympathy to the families of these good, brave men.

- 1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
- 2 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to each of the families and to
- 3 General David Poythress, Adjutant General, for presentation as may be appropriate.