

House Resolution 1427

By: Representatives Sainz of the 180th, Hitchens of the 161st, Willis of the 55th, DeLoach of the 167th, and Townsend of the 179th

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging Congress to pass the Thiokol Memorial Gold Medal Act; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, on February 3, 1971, the Thiokol plant in Woodbine, Georgia, which
3 manufactured trip flares for use during the Vietnam War, sustained a massive explosion that
4 claimed the lives of 29 employees: Celia Alberta, Ethel Banks, Annie C. Booth, Gloria W.
5 Booth, Bertha R. Brunswick, Bettie R. Burch, Charles Burch, James L. Chapman, Yvonne
6 M. Connelly, Jack Cox, Mae H. Davis, Mildred Davis, Howard Ellis Sr., Willie M. Fuller,
7 Pearlle M. Hutchinson, Annie M. James, Mack Kennedy, Essie D. King, Gracie M. Life,
8 Bertha M. Hill, Charles T. Monak, James Parland, Sandra R. Rauls, Cyrus D. Roberson,
9 Betty J. Roberts, Lillie B. Spells, Cheryl M. Sullivan, Mae A. Taylor, and Annie L. Williams;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, in May 1973, another worker, Joseph E. Wainright, died in a mortar shell
12 explosion at the same facility; and

13 WHEREAS, the Woodbine Thiokol Chemical Plant employees were members of the United
14 Chemical Workers Union 832 and the pioneers of men and women of all ethnicities working
15 together to earn equally an hourly wage, becoming the blueprint for the modern American
16 workplace; and

17 WHEREAS, the 600 government-contracted employees of the Woodbine Thiokol Chemical
18 Plant manufactured vital munitions for the United States Military during the Vietnam War
19 in Woodbine, Georgia; and

20 WHEREAS, on February 3, 1971, at 10:53 AM during Tripflare manufacturing operations
21 in Building M-132, an explosion occurred at the Woodbine Thiokol Chemical Plant; and

22 WHEREAS, on February 3, 1971, the United States Army, Navy, and Coast Guard, along
23 with civilian helicopter pilots, police officers, firemen, nurses, and doctors from 16 cities
24 and 14 hospitals, provided emergency rescue and medical care and fought to save lives; and

25 WHEREAS, the Thiokol explosion is the worst disaster in the history of southeastern
26 Georgia and is now ranked as the tenth out of 100 worst industrial accidents in United States
27 history in 100 years, which was triumphed over by the human spirit; and

28 WHEREAS, the 30 plant workers' lives were cut short in 1971 and 1973, but the tragic loss
29 of these Georgians changed the quality of life for millions of Americans, resulting in
30 improvements in transportation, emergency medical services, mass tort litigation, and plant
31 safety; and

32 WHEREAS, in 2026, United States Representative Buddy Carter introduced the Thiokol
33 Memorial Gold Medal Act, a bill that awards the Congressional Gold Medal to the 30 people
34 who died while in the service of their country during the historic explosion more than 50
35 years ago.

36 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
37 the members of this body urge Congress to enact the Thiokol Memorial Gold Medal Act.

38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
39 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
40 President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, the Speaker of the
41 United States House of Representatives, and to each member of the Congressional delegation
42 from this state.