

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 53

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas is pleased to recognize retired United States Air Force Colonel Joseph W. Kittinger on the occasion of the renaming of the Austin Civil Air Patrol squadron in his honor; and

WHEREAS, A legend in the community of aviators, Colonel Kittinger has made significant contributions as a space pioneer, test pilot, combat aviator, and world-record holder in helium balloons; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Kittinger began his illustrious career in 1949, when he was accepted into the United States Air Force aviation school; after graduation, he held several positions as a test pilot and flew experimental jet fighters and high-altitude balloons; and

WHEREAS, On August 16, 1960, Colonel Kittinger piloted a high-altitude gas balloon, the *Excelsior III*, to a height of 102,800 feet before parachuting from the open gondola; his jump, known as the Long Lonely Leap, remains the highest parachute jump in history, and he also became the first man to exceed the sound barrier without an aircraft or space vehicle on the descent; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Kittinger then volunteered for duty as a combat pilot in Vietnam; he flew a total of 483 missions in three tours of duty and he became one of the few pilots to shoot down a Soviet MiG-21 fighter; he was later shot down and spent 11 months as a prisoner in solitary confinement in the infamous Hanoi Hilton, a prisoner-of-war-camp; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Kittinger used his time in solitary confinement determining how to fly a balloon around the world; he went on to set world records in several categories, and in 1984, he became the first person to fly a balloon solo across the Atlantic Ocean; and

WHEREAS, The Civil Air Patrol is the official auxiliary of the United States Air Force; the organization is hosting a renaming ceremony in honor of Colonel Kittinger on January 23, 2007, in Austin; it is truly fitting that Colonel Kittinger receive a tribute to his many contributions to the field of aviation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 80th Legislature, hereby commend Colonel Joseph W. Kittinger for his pioneering spirit and his courage, patriotism, and service to his country; and, be it further

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RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for him as an expression of high regard from the Texas Senate.

Van de Putte

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on January 29, 2007.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate