

By: Anderson

H.R. No. 1720

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The family and friends of U.S. Army Captain Andrew  
2 Michael Pedersen-Keel suffered an immeasurable loss with the death  
3 of this valiant soldier on March 11, 2013, at the age of 28; and

4 WHEREAS, Assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special  
5 Forces Group (Airborne), out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Captain  
6 Pedersen-Keel was killed in Jalrez District, Afghanistan, while  
7 supporting Operation Enduring Freedom; and

8 WHEREAS, Andrew Pedersen-Keel was born on June 8, 1984, in  
9 South Miami, Florida, to Helen Pedersen and Henry Keel; he grew up  
10 in Madison, Connecticut, and attended Avon Old Farms High School,  
11 where he was admired for his charisma and for his athletic prowess  
12 on the wrestling, lacrosse, and football teams; and

13 WHEREAS, After graduating in 2002, Captain Pedersen-Keel  
14 became a member of the first class to enter the U.S. Military  
15 Academy at West Point after 9/11, earning a bachelor's degree in  
16 American legal studies in 2006; he went on to attend the Infantry  
17 Officer Basic Training Course and the U.S. Army Ranger School at  
18 Fort Benning, Georgia, after which he was assigned to Fort Hood as  
19 an infantry rifle platoon leader with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team,  
20 1st Infantry Division; and

21 WHEREAS, In June 2008, Captain Pedersen-Keel was deployed to  
22 Afghanistan with the 3rd Brigade as a company executive officer,  
23 and in September of that year, he became the leader of 3rd Platoon,  
24 B Company, in Kandahar Province, leading his platoon on more than

1 150 combat foot patrols and three air assault operations; during  
2 that time, he was promoted to the rank of captain; and

3         WHEREAS, Returning home in 2009, Captain Pedersen-Keel  
4 volunteered for the Special Forces Assessment and Selection Course;  
5 he went on to attend the Maneuver Captains Career Course in 2010,  
6 and in 2011, he graduated from the Special Forces Qualification  
7 Course; he was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces  
8 Group, as an ODA commander before being deployed in August 2012 for  
9 a second tour in Afghanistan, where he dedicated himself to  
10 training the Afghan army; and

11         WHEREAS, Captain Pedersen-Keel's decorations and awards  
12 include two Bronze Stars, the Army Commendation Medal, the National  
13 Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global  
14 War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, the NATO Medal, the Combat  
15 Infantryman Badge, the Expert Infantryman Badge, the Ranger Tab,  
16 the Special Forces Tab, the Pathfinder Badge, the Air Assault  
17 Badge, and the Parachutist Badge; he also received posthumously a  
18 third Bronze Star and a Purple Heart; and

19         WHEREAS, During his time at Fort Hood, this outstanding young  
20 man learned to love Central Texas; he took particular pleasure in  
21 visiting friends and family in Austin and in running with his dog,  
22 Lady, on the hike and bike trail around Lady Bird Lake; he was  
23 engaged to be married, and he had recently purchased a home in North  
24 Carolina; and

25         WHEREAS, Taking to heart the motto of the U.S. Army Special  
26 Forces, *de oppresso liber*, "to free the oppressed," Andrew  
27 Pedersen-Keel embodied the highest ideals of our nation's armed

1 forces, and the memory of his courage, patriotism, and kindness  
2 will continue to inspire and comfort all those he leaves behind;  
3 now, therefore, be it

4         RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas  
5 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of U.S. Army Captain  
6 Andrew Michael Pedersen-Keel and extend sincere condolences to the  
7 members of his family: to his mother, Helen Pedersen Keiser and her  
8 husband, Bob Keiser; to his father, Henry Keel; to his sister, Mary  
9 Elizabeth Keel; to his fiancée, Celeste Pizza; and to his other  
10 relatives and friends; and, be it further

11         RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
12 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
13 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Captain  
14 Andrew Michael Pedersen-Keel.