

SENATE JOURNAL

EIGHTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE — REGULAR SESSION

AUSTIN, TEXAS

PROCEEDINGS

SIXTY-FIFTH DAY

(Continued)

(Saturday, May 25, 2013)

AFTER RECESS

JOINT SESSION

(To pay tribute to those who have died in the service of the United States)

The Senate met at 10:10 a.m. in Joint Session in the Hall of the House of Representatives for the purpose of a joint memorial session honoring the fallen heroes of Texas, pursuant to the provisions of **HCR 209**.

The Honorable David Dewhurst, President of the Senate, called the Senate to order and announced a quorum of the Senate present.

The Honorable Joe Straus, Speaker of the House of Representatives, called the House to order, announced a quorum of the House present, and stated the purpose of the Joint Session. Representative José Menéndez welcomed and thanked the family members of the fallen heroes being honored.

Representative José Menéndez, Chair of the House Committee on Defense and Veterans Affairs, was recognized and thanked the Texas Army National Guard for the presentation of colors, Robin Farland for singing the national anthem, Senator Juan Hinojosa and Representative Ralph Sheffield for leading the pledges of allegiance to the United States and Texas flags, and Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr., for the invocation.

Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst briefly addressed the Joint Session assemblage and acknowledged the presence of Governor Rick Perry; John Steen, Secretary of State; and John Nichols, Texas Adjutant General.

Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst then introduced the Honorable Rick Perry, who addressed the Joint Session as follows:

Thank you Governor Dewhurst for your words this morning, on the first day of a weekend dedicated to remembering those who gave their lives for their country. It's a privilege to gather with all of you in this historic Chamber today. While we may have disagreements about policies and bills in the last days of the 83rd legislative session, there is absolutely no disagreement about the importance of honoring America's fallen heroes. Today, we honor America's fallen heroes. This event is a strong reminder of the simple fact that, as free Americans, we have an obligation larger than

politics to honor those who have given the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country. We have a responsibility to those who have fallen in the War on Terror and in defense of our nation in conflicts across the decades. Over the next few days, Americans will gather in town centers at civic memorials and in parks and schools across our country. They'll gather in recognition of those who have fallen in action, from our earliest days as a colony, seeking independence, through world-changing wars in Europe and the Pacific and in smaller, but still horrific, conflicts in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Far too many of us will speak from a position of personal loss. On every level, war touches communities, large and small. States send large numbers of their sons and daughters to places half-way around the world. Towns carve onto monuments the names of those who never returned home. And families deal with the space left in their lives once filled by loved ones empty chairs at holiday dinners, weddings and graduations. For them, the effects of losing a hero are felt every day, for entire lifetimes. As we remember those who gave all in defense of their countries, let's not forget those they left behind at home. They, too, have lost. Sons and daughters, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers. While the pain of such a loss does endure, so does pride and pride in what their loved ones stood for. They stood for things like dedication and freedom, liberty and love, both for their country and for those they fought alongside. That was what inspired them to risk everything in the first place, as they rushed across the beaches at Normandy, skirmished in the skies over Mig Alley and moved from house to house in the streets of Fallujah. The writer Joseph Campbell once defined a hero as "someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself." It's hard to argue against that description, which certainly fits those who die fighting for the nation they loved so dearly. Though they were defined by their sacrifice, we should also remember them as individuals, often painfully young, and all with great potential for success. More than just great patriots and fighters, they were talented artists, teachers, engineers, doctors and leaders. More than just brave, they were smart, caring, inventive and sometimes funny. More than names, more than numbers - they were people we all knew. They were people who gave their all in dedication to the principles that continue to make this the greatest country in the world. A sacrifice of that magnitude demands that we respect it. A sacrifice of that magnitude demands that we remember them. But what does it mean to remember them, exactly? I believe it means a lot more than cookouts, speeches and swimming. Those things are fine. We are meant to enjoy the freedoms these brave individuals fought and died for. But it also means living our lives in a fashion that honors their sacrifice. It means serving your community, helping those in need and making sure your voice is heard in important discussions. It means working to make our nation, and this world, a better place than we found it. And it means caring for the families of those who've recently lost a service member and doing everything we can to support our wounded warriors returning home. Sadly, our mission in the current Global War on Terror is not over. The same

principles that have made our nation great have continued to make us a target for those who hate, and who use fear and death to spread their own twisted view of the world. As we've seen in faraway places like London and Afghanistan, and in places closer to home, like Boston and Fort Hood, the forces of terror continue to try to intimidate and kill Americans, our allies, and anyone who loves freedom. As long as evil continues to target the innocent, our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines will continue to hunt them down. Today, and throughout this weekend, let's pray for those still in harm's way. Let's pray for the healing of the injured, and the comfort of those left behind by a fallen hero. Let's never forget the debt we owe all of those who served, not just on Memorial Day, but every day of the year. May God bless you and, through you, may He continue to bless the great State of Texas.

(Note: Prepared text)

Senator Van de Putte introduced Senator Brian Birdwell and Representative Ralph Sheffield for the reading of the names of fallen Texans. Senator Wendy Davis and Representative Joe Farias were introduced and joined by Governor Perry and Members from the House and Senate to make the presentation of flags to families of the fallen soldiers.

Speaker Straus requested a moment of silence. "Amazing Grace" was sung by Stephanie Urbina Jones.

A 19-gun salute was conducted by the Texas Military Forces Salute Battery. "Silver Taps" was conducted by Kevin Lawson. Captain Eric Gerber offered the benediction.

CONCLUSION OF JOINT SESSION

Speaker Straus at 11:37 a.m. announced that the purpose for which the Joint Session was called having been completed, the House would stand At Ease pending the departure of its guests.

ADJOURNMENT

Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst at 11:37 a.m. stated the purpose for which the Joint Session was called having been completed, the Senate, pursuant to a previously adopted motion, would stand adjourned, in memory of Yanci Tolbert, until 1:30 p.m. today.

