

State of Wisconsin



2017 Senate Joint Resolution 72

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION

Relating to: the life and public service of Melvin Robert Laird.

Whereas, former Congressman and Secretary of Defense Melvin Robert Laird was born on September 1, 1922, and died on November 16, 2016; and

Whereas, Melvin Laird was born to Melvin R. Laird Sr. and Helen (Connor) Laird, was raised and attended school in Marshfield, and graduated from Carleton College in Minnesota; and

Whereas, Mr. Laird served in the U.S. Navy from 1942 to 1946, serving in the Pacific Fleet with Task Forces 38 and 58, and while serving, he received a Purple Heart and other awards; and

Whereas, after leaving the Navy, Mr. Laird continued to pursue a life of public service, first being elected in 1946 to succeed his father in the Wisconsin State Senate, then being elected in 1952 to represent Wisconsin's 7th District in the House of Representatives, which included the areas of Marshfield, Wausau, Wisconsin Rapids, and Stevens Point; and

Whereas, as a Congressman, Mr. Laird was reelected eight consecutive times, developing a reputation as a key member on medical and health issues, and sponsoring legislation for major expansions of the National Institutes of Health and the Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta, in addition to supporting cancer research centers around the country; and

Whereas, Mr. Laird was selected by President Richard M. Nixon to serve as the Secretary of Defense, a role in which he confronted American challenges in Vietnam through the development of "Vietnamization," a program to train and equip South Vietnam's forces for combat while reducing U.S. combat troops; and

Whereas, as Secretary of Defense, Mr. Laird worked to decentralize decision-making, to reduce the defense budget, to transition to an all-volunteer military by ending the draft, and to maintain U.S. technological superiority with weapons like the B-1, Trident, and cruise missiles; and

Whereas, after serving his term as Secretary of Defense, Mr. Laird wrote for Reader's Digest and other publications, and in 1974 was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Ford; and

Whereas, Mr. Laird is survived by his wife Carole, son David, daughter Alison Laird-Large, son John, stepdaughter Kimberly Dalglish, four grandsons, and one step-granddaughter; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That the members of the Wisconsin legislature salute Melvin Laird's public service and honor his tremendous achievements and service to his country; and, be it further

Resolved, That the senate chief clerk shall provide a copy of this joint resolution to his family.

Representative Robin J. Vos
Speaker of the Assembly

Senator Roger Roth
President of the Senate

Date

Jeffrey Renk
Senate Chief Clerk