

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write today to request the designation of a state funeral for the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II.

Between 1941 and 1945, men and women from all walks of life and backgrounds answered the call to serve during the deadliest conflict in human history. Many Americans risked their lives in defense of freedom, but just 472 exceptional men were recognized with the Medal of Honor. Among the Greatest Generation, the actions of these few Americans earned them the highest military distinction.


As you read this letter, only two Medal of Honor recipients from WWII are living today: U.S. Army Technical Sergeant Charles Coolidge of Tennessee, and U.S. Marine Corps Corporal Hershel “Woody” Williams of West Virginia.


In 2020, the State Funeral for World War II Veterans presented Mr. Williams with the George Marshall Award, for exemplifying the sacrifice and service of the 16 million women and men who served in our Armed Forces during the Second World War. On March 19 of this year at the Medal of Honor Museum in Chattanooga, TN, the 2021 George Marshall Award will be presented to Mr. Coolidge. As these warriors continue to advance in age, we urge you to take decisive action to honor their heroism.


Honoring the last surviving WWII Medal of Honor recipient with a state funeral would serve as a final salute to his gallantry, and to the service and sacrifice of all those who fought during WWII. A state funeral is the highest honor that can be posthumously granted to an American citizen. It is fitting then, that this distinction be bestowed upon a veteran who earned the military’s highest honor while fighting to preserve the freedom on which this nation was founded.


Thank you for your attention to this matter and to these great Americans.


Sincerely,



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



Bill Hagerty
United States Senator



Tim Burchett
Member of Congress

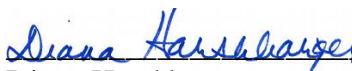

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress


Jim Cooper
Member of Congress

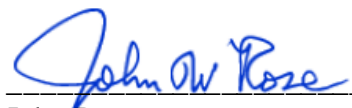

Scott DesJarlais
Member of Congress


Chuck Fleischmann
Member of Congress


Mark Green, M.D.
Member of Congress


Diana Harshbarger
Member of Congress


David Kustoff
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