

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 159

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Declaring Emporia, Kansas, to be the founding city of the Veterans Day holiday and recognizing the contributions of Alvin J. King and Representative Ed Rees to the enactment into law of the observance of Veterans Day.

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CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Whereas in 1953, Alvin J. King of Emporia, Kansas, proposed that Armistice Day be changed to Veterans Day to recognize and honor all veterans from all wars and conflicts;

Whereas in 1953, Veterans Day was first organized and celebrated in Emporia, Kansas;

Whereas although Alvin King was only 15 years old when the United States went to war in 1917 and never served in the Armed Forces, he had a deep respect for veterans;

Whereas Alvin King's stepson, John Cooper, whom he had raised, was killed in action in Belgium during World War II while serving with Rifle Company B, 137th Infantry Regiment;

Whereas after World War II, Alvin King developed friendships with the surviving members of Rifle Company B, 137th Infantry Regiment;

Whereas in the early 1950s, Alvin King suggested either creating a special day to honor all veterans or adapting Armistice Day so that it was dedicated to all veterans since, at that time, Armistice Day honored the veterans of World War I;

Whereas by 1953, the community of Emporia, Kansas, had raised enough money to send Alvin King and his wife, Gertrude, to Washington, D.C. to garner support for an official veterans day;

Whereas Alvin King had a friend and supporter in Representative Ed Rees of Emporia, Kansas, who was strongly in favor of King's idea and said "it would give the holiday a new meaning and more widespread patriotic observance";

Whereas on June 1, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was raised in Kansas, signed into law the Act proclaiming November 11 as Veterans Day (Public Law 380 of the 83rd Congress);

Whereas on October 8, 1954, President Eisenhower issued a presidential proclamation concerning Veterans Day in 1954 in which he stated, "On that day let us solemnly

remember the sacrifices of all those who fought so valiantly, on the seas, in the air, and on foreign shores, to preserve our heritage of freedom, and let us reconsecrate ourselves to the task of promoting an enduring peace so that their efforts shall not have been in vain”; and

Whereas the first nationwide observance of Veterans Day was on November 11, 1954: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That Congress hereby—

3 (1) encourages Americans to demonstrate their
4 support for veterans on Veterans Day by treating
5 that day as a special day of remembrance;

6 (2) declares Emporia, Kansas, to be the found-
7 ing city of Veterans Day;

8 (3) recognizes Alvin J. King, of Emporia, Kan-
9 sas, as the founder of Veterans Day; and

10 (4) recognizes that Representative Ed Rees, of
11 Emporia, Kansas, was instrumental in the efforts to
12 enact into law the observance of Veterans Day.

Passed the House of Representatives September 30,
2003.

Attest:

Clerk.