

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. _____

Honoring the life and legacy of the late Senator Max Cleland.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. WARNOCK (for himself and Mr. OSSOFF) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Honoring the life and legacy of the late Senator Max Cleland.

Whereas Joseph Maxwell Cleland was born August 24, 1942, in Atlanta, Georgia, the child of Juanita Kesler Cleland and Joseph Hughie Cleland, a World War II veteran, and grew up in Lithonia, Georgia;

Whereas Joseph Maxwell Cleland graduated from Stetson University in Florida in 1964, and received his Master's Degree in history from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia;

Whereas, following his graduation from Stetson University, Joseph Maxwell Cleland received a Second Lieutenant's Commission in the Army through its Reserve Officers' Training Corps program;

Whereas Joseph Maxwell Cleland volunteered for duty in the Vietnam War in 1967, serving with the 1st Cavalry Division;

Whereas, on April 8, 1968, during combat at the mountain base at Khe Sanh, Joseph Maxwell Cleland was gravely injured by the blast of a grenade, eventually losing both his legs and right arm;

Whereas Joseph Maxwell Cleland was awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious service and the Silver Star for gallantry in action;

Whereas, in 1970, Joseph Maxwell Cleland was elected to the Georgia Senate as the youngest member and the only Vietnam veteran, where he served until 1975;

Whereas, as a Georgia State Senator, Joseph Maxwell Cleland authored and advanced legislation to ensure access to public facilities in Georgia for elderly and handicapped individuals;

Whereas, in 1976, Joseph Maxwell Cleland began serving as a staffer on the United States Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs;

Whereas, in 1977, Joseph Maxwell Cleland was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to lead the Veterans Administration;

Whereas he was the youngest Administrator of the United States Veterans Administration ever and the first Vietnam veteran to head the agency;

Whereas he served as a champion for veterans and led the Veterans Administration to recognize, and begin to treat, post-traumatic stress disorder in veterans suffering the invisible wounds of war;

Whereas Joseph Maxwell Cleland was elected in 1982 as Georgia's Secretary of State, the youngest individual to hold the office, and served in that position for 14 years;

Whereas, in 1996, Joseph Maxwell Cleland was elected to the United States Senate representing Georgia;

Whereas as a member of the Committee on Armed Services, Joseph Maxwell Cleland advocated for Georgia's military bases, servicemembers, and veterans, including by championing key personnel issues, playing a critical role in the effort to allow servicemembers to pass their GI Bill education benefits to their children, and establishing a new veterans cemetery in Canton, Georgia;

Whereas, in 2002, Joseph Maxwell Cleland was appointed to the 9/11 Commission;

Whereas, in 2003, Joseph Maxwell Cleland was appointed by President George W. Bush to the Board of Directors for the Export-Import Bank of the United States, where he served until 2007;

Whereas, in 2009, Joseph Maxwell Cleland was appointed by President Barack Obama as Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission overseeing United States military cemeteries and monuments overseas, where he served until 2017;

Whereas Joseph Maxwell Cleland authored 3 books: Strong at the Broken Places, Going for the Max: 12 Principles for Living Life to the Fullest, and Heart of a Patriot;

Whereas Joseph Maxwell Cleland received numerous honors and awards over the course of his long and distinguished career;

Whereas Joseph Maxwell Cleland was a patriot, veteran, and lifelong civil servant who proudly served Georgia, the

United States, and all veterans and servicemembers of the United States; and

Whereas, on November 9, 2021, at the age of 79, Joseph Maxwell Cleland died, leaving behind a legacy of service, sacrifice, and joy: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That—

2 (1) the Senate—

3 (A) has heard with profound sorrow and
4 deep regret the announcement of the death of
5 Joseph Maxwell Cleland;

6 (B) honors the life and legacy of the late
7 Senator Joseph Maxwell Cleland for his—

8 (i) courage and sacrifice in combat in
9 the Vietnam War;

10 (ii) unwavering dedication to Georgia
11 as a State Senator, Secretary of State, and
12 Senator; and

13 (iii) honorable service to the United
14 States and veterans of the United States
15 through his lifetime of public service and
16 tenure as Administrator of the Veterans
17 Administration;

18 (C) proclaims that Joseph Maxwell
19 Cleland—

20 (i) represented the best of Georgia's
21 commitment to the United States; and

1 (ii) served continually for more than
2 50 years with an unwavering commitment
3 to public service; and

4 (D) respectfully requests that the Sec-
5 retary of the Senate—

6 (i) communicate this resolution to the
7 House of Representatives; and

8 (ii) transmit an enrolled copy of this
9 resolution to the family of Joseph Maxwell
10 Cleland; and

11 (2) when the Senate adjourns today, it stand
12 adjourned as a further mark of respect to the mem-
13 ory of Joseph Maxwell Cleland.