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GOVERNOR LAURA KELLY

April 16, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to you today to request the designation of a state funeral upon the passing of the last World War II Medal of Honor recipient.

Between the years 1939 and 1945, over 16 million men and women answered the call to service and served their country along side the Allied Powers. Of these brave men and women, only 473 received The Medal of Honor, the highest military decoration awarded by the United States government. The Medal of Honor is only conferred upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty.

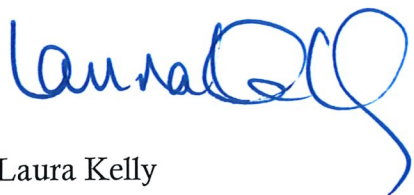
Today, only one of these brave Americans is still alive: U.S. Marine Corps Corporal Hershel Woodrow Williams of West Virginia. U.S. Army Technical Sergeant Charles H. Coolidge of Tennessee recently passed on April 6, 2021. These courageous servicemen risked their lives while serving their country with gallantry and are well deserving of the gratitude of the American people.

The President of the United States has the sole authority to designate a state funeral and historically, the President of the United States has designated state funerals for former presidents, generals, and other extraordinary Americans. While it is rare that a president designates a state funeral for a soldier, it is not unprecedented. In 1921, President Warren G. Harding designated a state funeral for the Unknown Soldier of World War I in recognition of not only the death of the Unknown Soldier, but also to honor the countless soldiers who died in service to their country during World War I without receiving any honor or recognition.

Letter to The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Re: World War II Medal of Honor recipient
April 16, 2021
Page 2

Upon the passing of the final World War II Medal of Honor recipient, it is essential that they are given a farewell that represents our nation's highest gratitude and regard. The designation of a state funeral would be a fitting farewell of the highest possible honor to all 16 million Americans who selflessly served during World War II, and an opportunity for Americans to unify in gratitude to these decorated heroes.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "L" and "K".

Laura Kelly
Governor