

2017-J3107

Senate Resolution No. 3107

BY: Senator GOLDEN

HONORING Master Sergeant Israel Del Toro upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the people of the State of New York to recognize and acknowledge those within our midst who have made significant contributions to the quality of life therein; and

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have served so valiantly and honorably in wars in which this country's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace in peace-time, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Master Sergeant Israel Del Toro upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate, to be presented at the Bensonhurst, Bay Ridge Kiwanis Club 14th Annual Victor V. Allegretti Dinner Dance on Thursday, October 12, 2017; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of

their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, After the tragic death of both of his parents, Israel Del Toro was raised by his grandparents in Chicago, Illinois; he attended the University of Illinois on a full academic scholarship, but dropped out to help take care of his family; and

WHEREAS, In 1997, Israel Del Toro was the first member of his family to join the United States Marine Corps; in 2005, he was deployed to Afghanistan, where he was following routine orders when his Humvee rolled over a buried pressure-plate mine and exploded; the horrific blast severed most of his fingers and left him in a coma, with burns covering 80% of his body; and

WHEREAS, After waking up from a three-month coma, Master Sergeant Del Toro was only given a 15% chance of survival, was told he may never walk or breathe on his own again, and he most definitely would not be able to re-enlist in the military; despite the grim diagnosis, he remained determined and made a promise to himself that he would return to active duty one day; and

WHEREAS, In May of 2006, Master Sergeant Israel Del Toro was walking and breathing on his own, and was awarded the Purple Heart for his bravery in the face of adversity; four years later, he became the first 100% combat disabled Air Force technician to re-enlist, proving once again what one can achieve with steadfast tenacity and determination; and

WHEREAS, During his rehabilitation, which included over 100 surgeries, Master Sergeant Israel Del Toro was introduced to adaptive sports as a therapeutic outlet; through this remarkable program, he thrived, growing stronger and stronger; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, Master Sergeant Israel Del Toro participated in the inaugural Invictus Games, a competition for wounded servicemen and women created by Prince Harry; although he lost his fingers and some vital muscles in the explosion, he was able to lift 215 pounds in the power lifting event; and

WHEREAS, During the second Invictus Games in 2016, Master Sergeant Israel Del Toro was honored by President George W. Bush in the opening ceremony, and captured a gold medal in shot put; throughout his athletic career, he also set world records in shot put, discus, and javelin; and

WHEREAS, For his meritorious service to his country and his role as leader in the adaptive sports community, Master Sergeant Israel Del Toro was the recipient of The Pat Tillman Award for Service at The 25th ESPYS Presented by Capital One on July 12, 2017; this prestigious award was presented to him by Jon Stewart during the live telecast on ABC; and

WHEREAS, Through his diligence and positive attitude, Master Sergeant Israel Del Toro seeks to eliminate the stigma associated with disabilities, and prove that with perseverance no obstacles are insurmountable; and

WHEREAS, Today, Master Sergeant Israel Del Toro continues to serve as a mentor for all; he currently works as a terminal attack controller instructor in the military, and was a vital member of the World Class Athlete program at the 2017 Warrior Games in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, With him throughout have been his wife, Carmen, and his son, Israel Del Toro, Jr., both of whom have shown him love and support and rejoice in his many achievements; and

WHEREAS, Residents of this great State must never forget the courage

with which these men and women served their country, and must recognize that no greater debt is owed than that owed to those who gave their lives for their beloved Nation and to those who continue to be missing in action; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad, Master Sergeant Israel Del Toro demonstrated his love for his country and merits forevermore, the highest respect of his State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Our Nation's veterans deserve to be recognized, commended and thanked by the people of the State of New York for their service and for their dedication to their communities, their State and their Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Master Sergeant Israel Del Toro upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Master Sergeant Israel Del Toro.