

2017-J5917

Senate Resolution No. 5917

BY: Senator YOUNG

COMMENDING Assistant Fire Chief Jim Tytka, Jr.
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, From time to time, this Legislative Body takes note of
certain extraordinary individuals it wishes to recognize for their
valued contributions to the success and progress of society and publicly
acknowledge their endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among
us all; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Assistant
Fire Chief Jim Tytka, Jr. upon the occasion of his designation as
recipient of the Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an
individual by the New York State Senate; 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, On Wednesday, June 6, 2018, a two year-old child was reported missing by his frantic mother who lived along Route 5 in Sheridan, New York, located in northern Chautauqua County; the small boy had been playing on his patio, and when his mother stepped away to do some laundry, he followed the family dog into the woods, just west of Silver Creek, near railroad tracks used routinely by freight trains; and

WHEREAS, Shortly thereafter, a coalition of police and fire departments quickly responded, under the command of the Sheridan Fire Department, and a Chautauqua County Sheriff's Office helicopter began making passes overhead; as the news spread throughout the small town, Rachel Braidich called her son, Teddy, and asked him to take part in the search because he was familiar with the wooded area; and

WHEREAS, Seventeen year-old Teddy Braidich joined in the search for the small boy who had now been missing for two hours; he then learned that public safety officials were asking civilian rescuers to leave the woods, so K-9 units would not confuse potential scents; and

WHEREAS, Teddy Braidich, aware of that request, stopped his ATV on a gravel path at least a mile from the nearest road, turned off his vehicle's engine, and started to call his father, Chris Braidich, to let him know he was heading back; in that brief instant of quiet, he heard a baby crying; and

WHEREAS, Concurrently, Assistant Chiefs Jim Tytka, Jr. and Adam Graf of the Silver Creek Volunteer Fire Department were walking along the CSX tracks which bordered the woods; Assistant Chief Tytka changed directions and began to search the far side of the tracks, and on an impulse, he crawled beneath the parked train; and

WHEREAS, Teddy Braidich, who was looking along tracks that cut through the woods toward the horizon, saw a man in a yellow emergency jacket, Assistant Chief Jim Tytka, Jr., crawling out from beneath a CSX freight train; Teddy immediately ran to him and informed him that he thought he heard a baby cry; and

WHEREAS, Assistant Chief Tytka, Jr. radioed back and asked for the sheriff's helicopter to move out of range to make it easier to hear, and then he and Teddy Braidich began moving up and down the tracks, shouting the child's name; and

WHEREAS, After walking about 100 yards, Assistant Chief Jim Tytka, Jr. stopped and heard a little voice say "what?"; he asked the boy where he was and amazingly, the tiny voice responded clearly, "I'm here"; Teddy Braidich and Assistant Chief Tytka quickly ran towards a wall of trees on an embankment which turned into a steep ravine with a drop of about 30 feet, with a slick area of mud and deep puddles on the bottom; the ground then rose into the other side of the ravine, and across that far slope was a fallen tree; and

WHEREAS, Behind that tree, shoeless and in a diaper and a T-shirt, was the child; fortunately, the boy appeared to be in relatively good shape; Teddy Braidich and Assistant Chief Jim Tytka, Jr. hastily made their way down the deep ravine, using the side of their feet for balance; Teddy reached the child first and lifted him across the log, handing him to Assistant Chief Tytka; and

WHEREAS, Together, the trio climbed out of the ravine; by the time they reached the top, another firefighter was already bearing down on them in an ATV; Assistant Chief Jim Tytka, Jr. jumped on the ATV with the little boy clinging to him, and raced towards the waiting ambulance where the toddler was checked over; and

WHEREAS, Assistant Chief Jim Tytka, Jr. should be regarded as a true hero; he has continually devoted himself to public service, demonstrating great courage and diligence in providing for the care and welfare of the citizens of his community and this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Praised for maintaining his composure and his professional conduct, Assistant Chief Jim Tytka, Jr. demonstrated his true character and genuine compassion for the welfare of others; and

WHEREAS, Within every community of the State of New York there are certain individuals who, by virtue of their commitment and dedication, command the respect and admiration of their community for their exemplary contributions and service on behalf of others; Assistant Chief Jim Tytka, Jr. is one such individual; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body that those dedicated public servants who unselfishly devote their lives to the preservation of order and the protection of others are worthy and due full praise for their commitment and noble endeavors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Assistant Chief Jim Tytka, Jr. 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 Assistant Chief Jim Tytka, Jr.