

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. SJ0002

Recognizing the service of Lester C. Hunt.

Sponsored by: Senator(s) Case and Rothfuss and
Representative(s) Stith and Yin

A JOINT RESOLUTION

for

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION recognizing United States Senator and
2 Wyoming Governor and Secretary of State Lester Calloway Hunt
3 as a consummate model to public servants for his distinguished
4 career, his commendable civility and courage and his service
5 to Wyoming and the United States of America.

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7 WHEREAS, after first coming to Wyoming as a recruit to play
8 semi-professional baseball for a Lander team, Lester C. Hunt
9 moved permanently to Wyoming to start his family and dental
10 practice after working full-time on the railroad to fund his
11 attendance at dental school; and

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13 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt served actively during World War I as
14 a First Lieutenant in the United States Army Dental Corps

1 from 1917 to 1919 and as a Major in the Army Reserve from
2 1919 to 1954; and

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4 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt started his distinguished career in
5 public service by serving in the Wyoming House of
6 Representatives, as a Representative from Fremont County,
7 from 1933 to 1934; and

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9 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt served as Wyoming's Secretary of State
10 from 1935 to 1943 where among his many accomplishments were
11 obtaining a copyright to preserve the mark of the Bucking
12 Horse and Rider and developing and implementing plans for the
13 Bucking Horse and Rider license plate first issued in 1936;
14 and

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16 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt became the first person to serve for
17 two consecutive terms as Governor of Wyoming, holding office
18 during and after World War II. Among Governor Hunt's many
19 accomplishments in addition to managing wartime concerns, he
20 oversaw the creation of a pension system for teachers and
21 advocated for a pension system for state employees as well as
22 expanded systems of health benefits; and

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1 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt served as Wyoming's accomplished
2 junior United States Senator from 1949 until his untimely
3 death by suicide, June 19, 1954; and

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5 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt supported a number of federal social
6 programs and advocated for federal support of low-cost health
7 and dental insurance policies. He also supported a variety of
8 programs proposed by the Eisenhower administration following
9 the Republican landslide in the 1952 elections, including the
10 abolition of racial segregation in the District of Columbia
11 and the expansion of Social Security; and

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13 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt served on Congressional committees
14 including the Senate Armed Services Committee, a special
15 Senate committee investigating war crimes and the Special
16 Committee on Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce; and

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18 WHEREAS, through Senate hearings, Lester C. Hunt was
19 introduced to the bullying and false accusation tactics of
20 Senator Eugene Joseph McCarthy and followers of the
21 charismatic McCarthy, where many considered McCarthy a hero
22 and the people who knew better stayed silent and attempted to
23 stay on his good side; and

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2 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt became a victim of this extremely
3 polarized era in public thinking that hurt our nation and
4 ruined the lives of many who found themselves on the other
5 side of the boisterous "majority." During this time, Senator
6 Hunt was a brave critic of the excesses of the McCarthyism
7 era, even introducing legislation allowing private citizens
8 to sue members of Congress who libeled them; and

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10 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt endured threats and intimidation, to
11 which his untimely death can be directly attributed, during
12 this dark and harsh period of our nation's political journey
13 characterized by incivility, irrational political dogma and
14 unfounded beliefs; and

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16 WHEREAS, while Lester C. Hunt was cruelly harmed by this
17 movement, thousands of others also had their lives shattered
18 when they were blacklisted by false accusations without
19 credible evidence. Anyone who challenged the methods employed
20 by the McCarthyists was labeled a communist sympathizer in a
21 widespread chilling of free speech; and

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1 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt was a victim of blackmail whereby his
2 opponents used despicable means to obtain control of a deeply
3 divided United States Senate; and

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5 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt remained true to Wyoming and to our
6 nation but succumbed to the overwhelming pressure and took
7 his own life, adding to the tragic legacy of Wyoming's suicide
8 prominence; and

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10 WHEREAS, in 1954, within a few months after Lester C. Hunt's
11 suicide, the Senate voted to censure Joseph McCarthy and our
12 nation began to heal; and

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14 WHEREAS, former Wyoming Senator Alan Simpson said decades
15 later that what happened to Lester C. Hunt "passed all
16 boundaries of decency and exposed an evil side of politics;"
17 and

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19 WHEREAS, Wyoming's Lester C. Hunt with decency and courage
20 contributed to the survival and preservation of a principled
21 system of participatory government that has carried this
22 nation through the darkest of times.

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1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE
2 LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WYOMING:

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4 **Section 1.** That the members of the Wyoming Legislature
5 commit to respect each member and support our democracy and
6 the right of every citizen to be heard and respected. With
7 this resolution, the Wyoming Legislature remembers and joins
8 with the people of Wyoming and all our nation to rededicate
9 ourselves to democracy, civility, decency and truth.

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11 **Section 2.** That the members of the Wyoming Legislature
12 commit to work with those with whom we disagree and to strive
13 for pragmatic problem-solving.

14

15 **Section 3.** That the members of the Wyoming Legislature
16 commit to be ever vigilant to do all they can to prevent
17 suicide and to be diligent in battling against injustices,
18 inequities, discriminative conditions and intolerant
19 practices that can lead to suicide.

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1 **Section 4.** That the Secretary of State of Wyoming
2 transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the
3 United States, to the President of the Senate and the Speaker
4 of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress
5 and to the Wyoming Congressional Delegation.

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(END)