

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 23

BY SENATOR MIZELL AND REPRESENTATIVE WHITE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To declare May 26, 2017, "John Wayne Day" at the Legislature in recognition of the legacy of an American film icon and of the work of the John Wayne Foundation in the fight against cancer.

WHEREAS, John Wayne remains one of America's most renowned and larger-than-life personalities who, with a career spanning five decades, appeared in more than one hundred seventy films, which made him the most popular film actor of the Twentieth Century; and

WHEREAS, John Wayne was an incredible actor and worked in almost every genre of film, from *The Quiet Man*, a romantic comedy about an Irish-born, American former boxer who returns to Ireland, looking for anonymity, but finding love and peace after the violence of his earlier career; to films about post-Civil War stories and how soldiers from both the North and the South dealt with the war's aftermath; and

WHEREAS, Wayne starred in a movie about Louisiana and its earlier attempt to conduct a lottery that would not be riddled with fraud and corruption; however, forces in the state are engaged in protection rackets and killing winners to funnel the money to corrupt judges and line the pockets of the miscreants; Wayne is a Yankee attorney traveling to New Orleans to take the post of state's attorney with the goal of ending the lottery; while sailing the Mississippi River, Wayne falls in love with the daughter of the man who runs the Louisiana State Lottery Company and general chaos ensues, but a lavish Mardi Gras scene provides a uniquely Louisiana feeling to the film; and

WHEREAS, Wayne starred also in primarily historical films, including *The Alamo*, which he directed, produced and starred in, stories of World War II such as *The Longest Day*, a movie about the D-Day invasion and *The Sands of Iwo Jima*, about one of the most significant battles in the Pacific theater of the war; and

WHEREAS, the genre for which he is most remembered were the Westerns, stories of cowboys, cattle drives, and gallant men rescuing women in distress, and his Oscar winning performance in *True Grit*, which was a Western film focusing on traits that Wayne brought to all his films; his grit, courage, and strength; and

WHEREAS, Wayne was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, bearing his likeness and inscribed, simply "John Wayne-American"; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor was presented posthumously by President Jimmy Carter, to Wayne's widow at which time he remarked: "The Duke' still leads missions on heroic adventures on behalf of fairness and justice. He embodies the enduring American values of individualism, relentless bravery, and perseverance. He was the quintessential patriot."; and

WHEREAS, John Wayne was a force not only on screen, but in American culture in the middle years of the Twentieth Century, and his successful fight against lung cancer in 1964 seemed to support the qualities reflected in both his movies and his life, but sixteen years later, in 1979, he succumbed to stomach cancer; and

WHEREAS, in the time between his bout with lung cancer and his death, he became passionate about helping others fight the disease and, eventually, finding a cure; and

WHEREAS, after his death and to honor his life, John Wayne's family established the John Wayne Cancer Foundation and the mission of the foundation is to bring the courage, strength, and grit, traits so closely associated with John Wayne, to the fight against cancer; and

WHEREAS, the foundation established the John Wayne Cancer Institute at St. John's Health Center in Santa Monica, California where research is continually working to understand fully the disease and to find effective treatments and, eventually, cures; and

WHEREAS, the foundation also funds an innovative skin cancer awareness and prevention program, focused on youth and first taught to and continues to be used by lifeguards along the California coast which is known as "Block the Blaze"; and

WHEREAS, skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States, with nearly four million Americans diagnosed annually, but it is ninety-five to one hundred percent curable when caught early and treated quickly; and

WHEREAS, "Block the Blaze", a program that focuses on prevention and self-screening, has educated over twenty-three thousand junior lifeguards in California and more than two hundred thousand young people and by 2016 the program expanded to Delaware, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia; and

WHEREAS, John Wayne was born in Winterset, Iowa on May 26, 1907, making the designation of John Wayne Day this year a remembrance of the one hundred tenth anniversary of his birth; and

WHEREAS, considering his contribution to the nation over five decades of portrayals of all of the basic American values, John Wayne was certainly an American patriot, who through his initial activism and the continuing work of his family and countless others through the John Wayne Cancer Foundation and the John Wayne Cancer Institute, with its programs such as "Block the Blaze", has so positively impacted American life and culture and has continued to do so after his death, through the Institute, with a grit, courage, and strength that should be an example and a goal of all who treasure the values of this most unique democratic nation.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby declare May 26, 2017, "John Wayne Day" at the Legislature in recognition of the legacy of an American icon of film and of the work of the John Wayne Foundation and the John Wayne Cancer Institute in the fight against cancer.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the John Wayne Cancer Institute in Santa Monica, California.

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

---

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES