

ONE HUNDRED THIRD LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 177

Introduced by Hadley, 37; Adams, 24; Ashford, 20; Avery, 28; Bloomfield, 17; Bolz, 29; Brasch, 16; Campbell, 25; Carlson, 38; Christensen, 44; Conrad, 46; Crawford, 45; Davis, 43; Dubas, 34; Gloor, 35; Haar, 21; Hansen, 42; Harms, 48; Howard, 9; Janssen, 15; Johnson, 23; Karpisek, 32; Kintner, 2; Kolowski, 31; Krist, 10; Larson, 40; Lathrop, 12; Lautenbaugh, 18; McCoy, 39; McGill, 26; Mello, 5; Murante, 49; Nelson, 6; Nordquist, 7; Pirsch, 4; Price, 3; Scheer, 19; Schilz, 47; Schumacher, 22; Seiler, 33; Smith, 14; Sullivan, 41; Wallman, 30; Watermeier, 1; Wightman, 36.

WHEREAS, on April 17, 2013, an explosion at a fertilizer plant in the town of West, Texas, population 2,800, leveled part of the town. Most of the victims were first responders from fire departments in West and other nearby towns who were on the scene trying to control the fire that preceded the blast; and

WHEREAS, like all states throughout the nation, Texas relies heavily on volunteer firefighters to respond when the call goes out summoning volunteers to drop everything they are doing and, in an instant, leave their ordinary lives and become extraordinary people; and

WHEREAS, Texas has 1,435 registered fire departments, of which 85% are mostly or entirely volunteer, including the town of West; and

WHEREAS, the fourteen victims who died in the blast included a grandmother, a town secretary, a fire truck builder, a town festival organizer, a Superman fan, fishing enthusiasts, hunters, fathers, men preparing to become emergency medical technicians, and devoted church and local organization members; and

WHEREAS, volunteer firefighters and first responders are people who are tough and selfless enough to put in a full day's work and then be ready for more; and

WHEREAS, the firefighters killed in the West, Texas, blast were:

KEVIN W. SANDERS, age 33, who was a husband, father, teacher, Superman fan, and volunteer firefighter with the Bruceville-Eddy Volunteer Fire Department near West and was taking an EMT class in West when the plant caught fire;

MORRIS BRIDGES, JR., age 41, who was a husband, father, motorcyclist, and volunteer firefighter for three years on the West Volunteer Fire Department;

JOEY PUSTEJOVSKY, age 29, who was a husband, father, secretary for the town of West, and volunteer firefighter on West's Volunteer Fire Department;

PERRY CALVIN, age 37, who was a husband, father, self-employed farmer, and volunteer firefighter at Navarro Mills and Martens Fire Departments and was attending an EMT class in West at the time of the fire;

KENNETH HARRIS, age 52, who was a husband, a father, and an off-duty Dallas Fire-Rescue Captain who rushed to the emergency to offer his help to other firefighters responding to the scene;

DOUGLAS SNOKHOUS, age 50, who was a husband, father, shop supervisor at Central Texas Iron Works in Waco, and 15-year volunteer on the West Volunteer Fire Department;

ROBERT SNOKHOUS, age 48, who was a husband, a father, an employee at Central Texas Iron Works in Waco, and a member of the West Volunteer Fire Department;

CODY DRAGOO, age 50, who was a husband, an employee at the fertilizer plant, and a member of the West Volunteer Fire Department;

JERRY DANE CHAPMAN, age 26, who was a member of the Abbott Volunteer Fire Department and was near the end of his training to become an emergency medical technician; and

CYRUS A. REED, age 29, who was a member of the Abbott and Bynum Volunteer Fire Departments and, at the time of the explosion, was in a classroom attending the last session of his training to be an emergency medical technician.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, FIRST SESSION:

1. That the Legislature extends its condolences to the families and friends of the firefighters killed in West, Texas, on April 17, 2013.

2. That the Legislature expresses its appreciation to all volunteer firefighters throughout the State of Nebraska and the nation who respond to danger when called.