

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 31—SENATORS RAGGIO, AMODEI, BEERS, CARE, CARLTON, CEGAVSKE, COFFIN, HARDY, HECK, HORSFORD, LEE, MATHEWS, MCGINNESS, NOLAN, RHOADS, SCHNEIDER, TIFFANY, TITUS, TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON AND WIENER

MAY 5, 2005

JOINT SPONSORS: ASSEMBLYMEN PERKINS, ALLEN, ANDERSON, ANGLE, ARBERRY JR., ATKINSON, BUCKLEY, CARPENTER, CHRISTENSEN, CLABORN, CONKLIN, DENIS, GANSERT, GERHARDT, GIUNCHIGLIANI, GOICOECHEA, GRADY, HARDY, HETTRICK, HOGAN, HOLCOMB, HORNE, KIRKPATRICK, KOIVISTO, LESLIE, MABEY, MANENDO, MARVEL, MCCLAIN, MCCLEARY, MORTENSON, MUNFORD, OCEGUERA, OHRENSCHALL, PARKS, PARNELL, PIERCE, SEALE, SHERER, SIBLEY, SMITH AND WEBER

Read and Adopted

SUMMARY—Memorializes former Governor Mike O’Callaghan.
(BDR R-75)

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EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets [omitted material] is material to be omitted.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Memorializing former Governor Mike O’Callaghan.

- 1 WHEREAS, Tracing the journey of a son born in Lacrosse,
2 Wisconsin, into a poor family that lost its farm during the Great
3 Depression, to become the man who is one of the most prominent,
4 beloved figures in the history of the State of Nevada encompasses a
5 story of extreme courage and remarkable character; and
6 WHEREAS, The leading actor in that story, Donal Neil “Mike”
7 O’Callaghan, affectionately known as “Big Mike,” approached each
8 role throughout his life in such a way that endeared him to all he
9 knew, and his imprint will forever be stamped upon this State; and
10 WHEREAS, Former Governor Mike O’Callaghan grew up on his
11 family’s farm and helped earn a living by raising cows and selling



1 cream until, at the age of 16, he joined the Marine Corps and served
2 in the U.S. Pacific Fleet as an anti-aircraft gunner, earning the rank
3 of sergeant, and after his discharge in 1948, served in the Marine
4 Corps Reserves until 1950; and

5 WHEREAS, As a young man, the former Governor was employed
6 as an ironworker and participated in amateur boxing until he
7 continued his military service by joining the Air Force as an
8 intelligence officer, but because he wanted to see action, he
9 transferred to the Army as an infantryman in 1952 and served in the
10 Korean War, during which he lost the lower half of one leg after
11 courageously rescuing soldiers who were cut off from the trenches
12 by enemy action; and

13 WHEREAS, Following his military service, Mike graduated from
14 the University of Idaho in Moscow, where he not only earned a
15 master's degree and graduated in the top 10 of his class, but also
16 won the heart of Carolyn Randall, and the two were married on
17 August 25, 1954, and dedicated themselves to each other and their
18 children during their marriage of almost 50 years; and

19 WHEREAS, Heeding his new wife's advice, Mike chose to accept
20 a job as a teacher at Basic High School in Henderson, rather than a
21 position as a principal in Idaho, and the family moved to Nevada in
22 1956; and

23 WHEREAS, Upon completion of 5 years of teaching, Mike
24 continued his public service in municipal, state and federal positions
25 from 1961 to 1969; and

26 WHEREAS, O'Callaghan was elected Governor of the State of
27 Nevada in 1970 after waging a campaign in which he sought to get
28 in touch literally with the "average man on the street" by greeting
29 motorists on the corners of busy intersections in Las Vegas during
30 blistering heat; and

31 WHEREAS, As Governor of this State for two terms,
32 O'Callaghan continually fought for the "little man" and
33 accomplished his goal of creating a government that was responsive
34 to the needs of its people by promoting the welfare of disadvantaged
35 children and the mentally ill, creating new agencies to assist senior
36 citizens, consumers and the poor, actively working to preserve the
37 beauty of Lake Tahoe, ensuring affordable housing for all, providing
38 assistance to workers injured on the job and advocating for prison
39 reform, rights for women and laws requiring motorcycle helmets;
40 and

41 WHEREAS, There is little doubt that he could have won a third
42 term as Governor, but instead he accepted an executive position
43 with the *Las Vegas Sun*, where he became a popular columnist and
44 an important voice in Nevada, and as Executive Editor, he acted as
45 the conscience of the newspaper; and



1 WHEREAS, For his extraordinary courage, he was awarded
2 multiple military medals, and a few of the other honors he attained
3 include membership in the Hall of Fame at the University of Idaho,
4 an award from the Nevada Judges Association, the selection by
5 *Time* Magazine in 1974 as one of 200 promising young Americans,
6 induction into the Nevada Newspaper Hall of Fame, the David L.
7 Simon Bridge Builder for Peace Award and the honor of being
8 nominated shortly before his death to serve on the federal Veterans'
9 Disability Benefits Commission; and

10 WHEREAS, Outside of the public eye, Mike O'Callaghan
11 conducted himself with honor and compassion, never bringing
12 attention to his quiet acts such as arriving early in the morning at
13 homeless shelters to serve coffee and doughnuts to the poorest of the
14 poor and frequently visiting hospitals to encourage recent amputees;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, His devotion to the youth of this State inspired the
17 lives of innumerable young people as he actively and ardently
18 supported children in sports throughout his life, took time as
19 Governor to change lives of juvenile offenders by being
20 instrumental in the building of China Spring Youth Camp in
21 Douglas County and Spring Mountain Youth Camp in Las Vegas,
22 and performed random acts of generosity such as graciously hosting,
23 impromptu, in the Governor's Office, a basketball team of
24 underprivileged boys from Hawthorne when they came to play in
25 Carson City; and

26 WHEREAS, Possibly the most predominant thread intertwining
27 the eulogies offered for former Governor Mike O'Callaghan was the
28 mention that he never succumbed to developing an ego that could so
29 easily have accompanied the prominence he attained, but
30 continually dedicated himself to the service of others in every aspect
31 of his daily life; and

32 WHEREAS, By the end of his journey, Mike O'Callaghan had
33 become the epitome of the words of the novelist James Michener,
34 who penned fictional sagas that can only rival the real-life story of
35 this great man, a life "decently led and work well done"; now,
36 therefore, be it

37 RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE
38 ASSEMBLY CONCURRING, That the members of the 73rd Session of
39 the Nevada Legislature express their admiration, respect and
40 veneration for Donal Neil "Mike" O'Callaghan and empathize with
41 the members of his family and all those who feel an emptiness as the
42 result of his loss; and be it further

43 RESOLVED, That former Governor Mike O'Callaghan will never
44 be forgotten by the people of the State of Nevada, and when he is



- 1 remembered, the memories will be of a man who proved himself to
- 2 be an icon to which all can aspire; and be it further
- 3 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and
- 4 transmit a copy of this resolution to Mike's beloved children,
- 5 Michael O'Callaghan, Colleen O'Callaghan-Miele, Teresa Duke,
- 6 Brian O'Callaghan and Tim O'Callaghan.

