



# Senator David Givens: Remembering Fallen Heroes



Senate report  
State Sen. David Givens

The arrival of Memorial Day has come to feel like the start of summer, especially with so many students' school years ending across the commonwealth. During the holiday weekend, families across our state will begin their yearly traditions and the memory-making we all enjoy. These moments with family and friends would not be possible without the sacrifices of many who laid down their lives to bless ours. Properly honoring the memory of fallen service members demands a celebration with a heart of gratitude and a deliberate effort to educate our children on the significance of Memorial Day. How fortunate are we to live as United States citizens and residents of our great state? As is evident in thousands having just cast ballots in the state's primary election, no other country boasts the freedoms and privileges we enjoy in America, a country founded on religious liberty and the pursuit of happiness, no matter how one may define it. Protecting those

freedoms requires a military force like none other. Memorial Day was established to honor those who perished in the Civil War, which claimed more lives than any conflict in our nation's history. In the late 1860s, Americans began holding spring-time tributes to fallen soldiers, decorating graves, and praying together. These memorial activities became a tradition. I ask you to join me in memorializing the brave servicemen and women who lost their lives in the line of duty. Tragically, we experienced a great loss here in Kentucky earlier this year. Nine soldiers died in a March 29 crash when two Black Hawk helicopters crashed. While not from Kentucky, it is fitting to remember these servicemen and the families they left behind. Those who perished in the crash included: Staff Sgt. Joshua Gore, 25, from Morehead City, North Carolina; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Zachary Esparza, 36, from Jackson, Missouri; Sgt. David Solinas Jr., 23, from Oradell, New Jersey; Staff Sgt. Taylor Mitchell, 30, from Mountain Brook, Alabama; Sgt. Isaac J. Gayo, 27, from Los Angeles, California; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Rusten Smith, 32, from Rolla, Missouri; Warrant Officer 1 Aaron Healy,

32, from Cape Coral, Florida; Cpl. Emilie Marie Eve Bolanos, 23, from Austin, Texas; and Warrant Officer 1 Jeffery Barnes, 33, from Milton, Florida. As you create cherished memories with your family this holiday weekend, engage in conversation with the young people in your life to ensure the special tradition of Memorial Day is not lost. Express to them the magnitude of the holiday. Remember the words written by President John Adams to Benjamin Rush in 1808: "Our obligations to our country never cease but with our lives." Remember our fallen heroes who fulfilled their obligation to their nation more than most others ever will. It is my honor to serve as your state senator. I encourage you to seek a Memorial Day ceremony honoring our fallen military members among your other family traditions. I wish you and yours a safe and blessed Memorial Day weekend.

## Memorial Day Service

The American Legion Memorial Day Service to honor our veterans will be held Sunday, May 28 at American Legion Park at 1 p.m. CT. Everyone is welcome to attend.



*We pay tribute to our heroes,  
past and present, for their courage,  
sacrifice and service to our country.*

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### Did You Know?

The United States' military involvement in the Vietnam War began in February 1961 and ended in May 1975. During that time, approximately 2.7 million Americans served in Vietnam and more than 58,000 lost their lives, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Canadians also fought in the Vietnam War. Officially, Canada played the role of neutral peacemaker. However, according to The Canadian Encyclopedia, Canada secretly backed the American effort in helping the Southern Vietnamese forces reclaim footing against the Northern Vietnamese. America was not able to stop the Tet Offensive in 1968. It would take two more assaults before the U.S. and South Vietnamese would retake lost territory. However, the victory was short-lived. When the 1973 Paris Peace Accords were signed, the North Vietnamese refused the last conditions which required releasing civilian detainees and allowing free and democratic elections in South Vietnam. The refusal prompted an armed insurrection in April 1975, and Saigon, the South capital, fell to Northern forces and was renamed Ho Chi Minh City. The U.S. then withdrew from the country.

# Gone, But Never Forgotten

## Honoring the Memory of Our Heroes in Uniform

On Memorial Day, we pause to reflect on the service and sacrifice of the men and women of our Armed Forces. We honor the memory of those who lost their lives protecting our nation's freedom, and we salute all those who have served in our military past and present. Their selfless dedication reminds us that freedom is not free, and we will never forget their courage and extraordinary contribution to our country.

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