

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 105

Celebrating the life of Leslie William Coffelt.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 9, 2026
Agreed to by the Senate, February 12, 2026

WHEREAS, Leslie William Coffelt, a dedicated and courageous member of what was then known as the White House Police Force, made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty on November 1, 1950; and

WHEREAS, Leslie Coffelt grew up in Oranda in Shenandoah County, where he enjoyed hunting and training with firearms from a young age; and

WHEREAS, Leslie Coffelt was the second member of his family to graduate from high school and traveled to Washington, D.C., seeking employment in 1928; he joined the Metropolitan Police Department the following year and was assigned to patrol the area around K Street; and

WHEREAS, from 1936 to 1941, Leslie Coffelt worked as a building technician, then returned to law enforcement and requested a transfer to the White House Police Force, now known as the United States Secret Service (USSS) Uniformed Division; and

WHEREAS, shortly after joining the White House Police Force, Leslie Coffelt was drafted into the United States Army and served as a member of the 300th Infantry Regiment for several months; and

WHEREAS, during a period in 1950 when the White House was undergoing renovations, Leslie Coffelt was assigned to Blair House, which was serving as the temporary residence of President Harry S. Truman; and

WHEREAS, on November 1, 1950, while stationed in the guard booth at the west corner of the Blair House, Leslie Coffelt was attacked by two Puerto Rican nationalists intending to breach the building and assassinate President Truman; and

WHEREAS, despite being shot three times at close range, Leslie Coffelt exited the guard booth at great personal risk and engaged the attackers, killing the remaining terrorist with a single shot when there were no other obstacles between him and the interior of the Blair House, thereby saving the President's life; and

WHEREAS, Leslie Coffelt was rushed to a nearby hospital, but subsequently died from his injuries and remains one of only four members of the United States Secret Service to be shot in the line of duty and the only officer killed while defending the president; he is buried at Arlington National Cemetery with his wife, Cressie; and

WHEREAS, Leslie Coffelt's service and sacrifice have inspired generations of United States Secret Service members and law-enforcement officers; the USSS Uniformed Division day room at the Blair House was named in his honor, and the USSS Office of Training's Leslie Coffelt Marksmanship Award is awarded to graduating recruits with the highest average score with all standard-issue firearms; and

WHEREAS, in December 2025, the United States Secret Service also dedicated an auditorium in Leslie Coffelt's honor at the agency's headquarters in Washington, D.C.; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Leslie William Coffelt, a distinguished law-enforcement officer who gave his life in defense of the president of the United States; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Leslie William Coffelt as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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