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March 18, 2013

**STATEMENT ON AN ACT CREATING A CIVILIAN MEDAL OF HONOR.**

I'M RETIRED FROM THE NAVY. IN MY 15 YEARS OF SEA DUTY ON SEVEN SHIPS I KNEW I HAD SHIPMATES WHO WOULD WILLINGLY GO INTO GREAT DANGER SO THE SHIP COULD SUCCEED IN ITS MISSION OR TO SAVE A SHIPMATE. BUT NOTHING PREPARED ME FOR READING OF VICTORIA SOTO'S SELFLESS ACTION TO SHIELD THE CHILDREN IN HER CLASS FROM MURDER. WE KNOW HER STORY OF COURAGE AND SACRIFICE.

THE MILITARY RECOGNIZES IT GREATEST HEROES WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR, UNFORTUNATELY, MOST ARE POSTHUMOUS. THIS PROPOSED LEGISLATION IS A MOVE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION TO PRESERVE THE MEMORY OF THE HEROIC ACTION OF ORDINARY RESIDENTS. I VERY MUCH SUPPORT THE INTENT AND STRUCTURE OF THIS PROPOSAL FOR THE PERMANENT RECOGNITION OF THE PEOPLE WHOM IT WOULD HONOR.

I ENVISION A PARCEL OF LAND ALREADY BEING MAINTAINED BY THE STATE BEING MADE AVAILABLE TO A VOLUNTEER GROUP WHICH WOULD FUND A MONUMENT THROUGH PUBLIC DONATIONS. THIS MONUMENT SHOULD RECORD THE HEROIC ACTS AND THE NAMES OF SUCH PEOPLE AS TEACHERS, VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMTS, CROSSING GUARDS AND ANY OTHERS WHO GO BEYOND WHAT IS EXPECTED TO ATTEND TO THE SAFETY OF OTHERS. WITHOUT CARE FOR THEMSELVES. AND, IT IS THE ACT AS WELL AS THE PERSON THAT MUST HONORED, AND BE MORE THAN A FEW HUNDRED YARDS OF HIGHWAY OR AN OVERPASS BY WHICH POLICEMEN ARE REMEMBERED.

I MUST ALSO ADD THAT MISS SOTO'S DEATH AND MANY AT THE SCHOOL MIGHT HAVE BEEN PREVENTED IF SHE OR ANOTHER IN THE AREA WERE ARMED AND TRAINED. A MORE PURPOSEFUL TRIBUTE TO HER AND OTHER LIKE HER WOULD BE EFFORTS TO COUNTER VIOLENCE, NOT TO HONOR PEOPLE WHO WERE VICTIMS.