

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 23, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We, the members of the Kansas Congressional Delegation, write today to request your support for a state funeral for the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II. The men and women who fought and served in World War II, rightfully called the “Greatest Generation,” saved our nation and the world from the tyranny and evil of the Axis Powers. The 473 Medal of Honor recipients of World War II represent the incredible courage and sacrifice of that generation. Only two of these heroes remain, and when the last one passes away, we must render a farewell that properly represents our nation’s highest regard and most profound gratitude.

Medal of Honor winners are frequently called upon to speak about their wartime experiences, and their perspectives share a common theme: the conviction that their medal represents countless other acts of heroism by their brothers and sisters in arms, acts that were committed selflessly and without acknowledgement or celebration. They often use their speaking engagements to recognize the heroism of their fellow warriors. One example is Walter D. Ehlers, a Medal of Honor recipient from Kansas. Sergeant Ehlers, who participated in the D-Day invasion of Normandy, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his acts of bravery “in the face of overwhelming forces” a few days later. What his citation does not mention is that his brother, Roland, participated in the D-Day invasion as well but was killed in action on the beach. Sergeant Ehlers said of his brother in one interview, “He was my hero until the day he died. He still is.” Thus, Medal of Honor winners serve as living and breathing testaments to the courage and sacrifice of all of our nation’s warriors, and the last remaining Medal of Honor recipient from World War II will carry that legacy.

This would not be the first time that a soldier received a state funeral to honor the countless others they represent, along with their own personal sacrifice. In 1921, the Unknown Soldier of World War I was interred with a state funeral because President Harding recognized that the Unknown Soldier represents countless others who died and were buried in unmarked graves with no honors and no recognition. Significantly, President Harding placed a Medal of Honor on the Unknown Soldier’s casket.

Mr. President, we speak for our constituents when we share our conviction that this last decorated hero of the Greatest Generation must be given a farewell of the very highest order our nation can offer. Please let us know if there is any way that we can further support this noble and necessary effort.

Sincerely,



Jerry Moran
United States Senate



Roger Marshall
United States Senate



Tracey Mann
U.S. House of Representatives



Jake LaTurner
U.S. House of Representatives



Ron Estes
U.S. House of Representatives



Sharice Davids
U.S. House of Representatives