



2026 South Dakota Legislature

House Commemoration 8012

Introduced by: **Representative Goodwin**

1 **A LEGISLATIVE COMMEMORATION recognizing Captain Royce Williams for his**
2 **exemplary military service and bravery in combat.**

3 WHEREAS, Royce Williams was raised on a farm near Wilmot, South Dakota, during the
4 Great Depression, and he grew up embodying the values of hard work, courage, and
5 leadership; and

6 WHEREAS, Royce Williams earned a commission in the United States Navy, became a
7 naval aviator, and was assigned to fly the F9F Panther while on combat duty off the coast of
8 North Korea in November of 1952; and

9 WHEREAS, Lieutenant Junior Grade Williams was on combat air patrol with a group of
10 three other pilots on 18 November, 1952, when seven Soviet MiG-15s approaching the US
11 fleet engaged the fighters; and

12 WHEREAS, three of the pilots were ordered to return to the USS Oriskany, but the Soviet
13 MiG-15s had already fired upon Williams, who was engaged in aerial combat for the next
14 thirty-five minutes, which is believed to be the longest dogfight in US Navy history, and
15 Williams shot down four enemy aircraft and damaged two others before ultimately landing his
16 aircraft back on the deck of the USS Oriskany; and

17 WHEREAS, the United States intercepted the Soviet Air Force's transmissions confirming
18 the hostile intent on the US fleet, the attack, and the loss of Soviet aircraft, but due to the
19 security classification, Lieutenant Junior Grade Williams was directed never to speak of the
20 event, and knowledge of the event remained classified until 1990, after Williams retired with
21 the rank of Captain following a distinguished career; and

22 WHEREAS, in December, 2025, the Secretary of the Navy recommended upgrading
23 Captain Williams' military decoration to the Medal of Honor, and the President of the United

1 States personally called to inform Captain Royce Williams of his intent to award him the
2 nation's highest honor for courage in the face of the enemy;

3 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT COMMEMORATED, by the One Hundred First Legislature of the
4 State of South Dakota, that Captain Royce Williams is recognized for his exemplary military
5 career and bravery in combat.