

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. SJ0002

Recognizing the service of Lester C. Hunt.

Sponsored by: Senator(s) Case and Rothfuss and  
Representative(s) Stith and Yin

## A JOINT RESOLUTION

for

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION recognizing United States Senator and  
2 Wyoming Governor and Secretary of State Lester Calloway Hunt  
3 as a consummate model to public servants for his distinguished  
4 career, his commendable civility and courage and his service  
5 to Wyoming and the United States of America.

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7 WHEREAS, after first coming to Wyoming in 1911 as a recruit  
8 to play semi-professional baseball for a Lander team, Lester  
9 C. Hunt returned to Wyoming in 1917 to start his family and  
10 dental practice after working full-time on the railroad to  
11 fund his attendance at dental school; and

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13 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt served actively during World War I as  
14 a First Lieutenant in the United States Army Dental Corps

1 from 1917 to 1919 and as a Major in the Army Reserve from  
2 1919 to 1954; and

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4 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt started his distinguished career in  
5 public service by serving in the Wyoming House of  
6 Representatives, as a Representative from Fremont County,  
7 from 1933 to 1934; and

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9 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt served as Wyoming's Secretary of State  
10 from 1935 to 1943 where among his many accomplishments were  
11 obtaining a copyright to preserve the mark of the Bucking  
12 Horse and Rider and developing and implementing plans for the  
13 Bucking Horse and Rider license plate first issued in 1936;  
14 and

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16 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt was elected to two consecutive terms  
17 as Governor of Wyoming, holding office during and after World  
18 War II. Among Governor Hunt's many accomplishments in  
19 addition to managing wartime concerns, he oversaw the  
20 implementation of a pension system for teachers and advocated  
21 for a pension system for state employees as well as expanded  
22 systems of health benefits; and

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1 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt served as Wyoming's accomplished  
2 junior United States Senator from 1949 until his untimely  
3 death by suicide, June 19, 1954; and

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5 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt supported a number of federal social  
6 programs and advocated for federal support of low-cost health  
7 and dental insurance policies. He also supported a variety of  
8 programs proposed by the Eisenhower administration following  
9 the Republican landslide in the 1952 elections, including the  
10 abolition of racial segregation in the District of Columbia  
11 and the expansion of Social Security; and

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13 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt served on Congressional committees  
14 including the Senate Armed Services Committee, a special  
15 Senate committee investigating war crimes and the Special  
16 Committee on Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce; and

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18 WHEREAS, through Senate hearings, Lester C. Hunt was  
19 introduced to the bullying and false accusation tactics of  
20 Senator Eugene Joseph McCarthy and followers of the  
21 charismatic McCarthy, where many considered McCarthy a hero  
22 and the people who knew better stayed silent and attempted to  
23 stay on his good side; and

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2 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt became a victim of this extremely  
3 polarized era in public thinking that hurt our nation and  
4 ruined the lives of many who found themselves on the other  
5 side of the boisterous "majority." During this time, Senator  
6 Hunt was a brave critic of the excesses of the McCarthyism  
7 era, even introducing legislation allowing private citizens  
8 to sue members of Congress who libeled them; and

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10 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt endured threats, intimidation and  
11 attempted blackmail associated with the excesses of  
12 McCarthyism, to which his untimely death can be directly  
13 attributed, during this dark and harsh period of our nation's  
14 political journey characterized by incivility, irrational  
15 political dogma and unfounded beliefs; and

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17 WHEREAS, while Lester C. Hunt was cruelly harmed by this  
18 movement, thousands of others also had their lives shattered  
19 when they were blacklisted by false accusations without  
20 credible evidence. Anyone who challenged the methods employed  
21 by the McCarthyists was labeled a communist sympathizer in a  
22 widespread chilling of free speech; and

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1 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt was a victim of blackmail whereby his  
2 opponents used despicable means to obtain control of a deeply  
3 divided United States Senate; and

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5 WHEREAS, Lester C. Hunt remained true to Wyoming and to our  
6 nation but succumbed to the overwhelming pressure and took  
7 his own life, adding to the tragic legacy of Wyoming's suicide  
8 prominence; and

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10 WHEREAS, in 1954, within a few months after Lester C. Hunt's  
11 suicide, the Senate voted to censure Joseph McCarthy and our  
12 nation began to heal; and

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14 WHEREAS, former Wyoming Senator Alan Simpson said decades  
15 later that what happened to Lester C. Hunt "passed all  
16 boundaries of decency and exposed an evil side of politics;"  
17 and

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19 WHEREAS, Wyoming's Lester C. Hunt with civility, decency and  
20 courage contributed to the survival and preservation of a  
21 principled system of participatory government that has  
22 carried this nation through the darkest of times.

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1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE  
2 LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WYOMING:

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4       **Section 1.** That the members of the Wyoming Legislature  
5 commit to respect each member and support our republican form  
6 of government and the right of every citizen to be heard and  
7 respected. With this resolution, the Wyoming Legislature  
8 remembers and joins with the people of Wyoming and all our  
9 nation to rededicate ourselves to democracy, civility,  
10 decency and truth.

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12       **Section 2.** That the members of the Wyoming Legislature  
13 commit to work with those with whom we disagree and to strive  
14 for pragmatic problem-solving.

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16       **Section 3.** That the members of the Wyoming Legislature  
17 commit to be ever vigilant to do all they can to prevent  
18 suicide and to be diligent in battling against injustices,  
19 inequities, discriminative conditions and intolerant  
20 practices that can lead to suicide.

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1           **Section 4.** That the Secretary of State of Wyoming  
2 transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the  
3 United States, to the President of the Senate and the Speaker  
4 of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress  
5 and to the Wyoming Congressional Delegation.

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(END)