

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 15

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator GERALD CARDINALE

District 39 (Bergen and Passaic)

Senator THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.

District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)

SYNOPSIS

Designates October 23rd of each year as Beirut Barracks Bombing Remembrance Day in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating October 23rd of each year as
2 Beirut Barracks Bombing Remembrance Day in the State of New
3 Jersey.
4
5 **WHEREAS**, Early on the morning of October 23, 1983, a 19-ton
6 Mercedes-Benz truck went through a five-foot high concertina wire
7 fence and into the entryway of a four-story barracks building at
8 Beirut International Airport housing several hundred United States
9 Armed Forces personnel; and
10 **WHEREAS**, A suicide bomber, later identified as an Iranian national
11 named Ismail Ascari, detonated an explosive charge later estimated
12 to be equivalent to 21,000 pounds of TNT, which lifted the building
13 off the ground and caused it to collapse in a mound of gray,
14 smoking rubble; and
15 **WHEREAS**, When the dust settled, 220 United States Marines,
16 members of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines-Battalion Landing Team,
17 had been killed, making the day the deadliest for the Marine Corps
18 since the Battle of Iwo Jima in February 1945, during World War
19 II; and
20 **WHEREAS**, In addition, 18 Navy sailors and three Army soldiers were
21 killed, and more than 100 other American military personnel were
22 injured; and
23 **WHEREAS**, Within 10 minutes of the attack, and not far from the
24 airport, another suicide bomber in an explosive-packed truck
25 targeted a nine-story building housing soldiers from the 3rd
26 Company of France's Parachute Chasseur Regiment and killed 58
27 paratroopers; and
28 **WHEREAS**, An unknown group calling itself Islamic Jihad claimed
29 responsibility for the bombings, though it was later established that
30 the Iranian- and Syrian-sponsored paramilitary force Hezbollah had
31 organized the attacks; and
32 **WHEREAS**, The United States had deployed the Marines to Lebanon in
33 1982 as part of a multi-national security force to oversee a ceasefire
34 brokered between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization,
35 but when Lebanon's civil war reignited in September of that year,
36 American military forces found themselves in the middle of a
37 raging sectarian conflict; and
38 **WHEREAS**, The Beirut bombings were later recognized as the start of
39 the upswing in terrorism that has grown steadily worse over the last
40 three decades and has resulted in what is now known as the Global
41 War on Terror; and
42 **WHEREAS**, In May 2003, a federal district court in the District of
43 Columbia ruled that Hezbollah had carried out the attack at the
44 direction of the Iranian government and as compensation awarded
45 the victims of the bombings and their families more than \$10
46 billion in damages from Iran, though little of that money has been
47 collected; and

SJR15 CARDINALE, T.KEAN

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1 **WHEREAS**, In the years since the bombings, the tragic event has been
2 memorialized by the Beirut Memorial established at Marine Corps
3 Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and memorials at the Armed
4 Forces Chaplaincy Center at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, Penn's
5 Landing, Philadelphia, Boston, Massachusetts, and Florida; and
6 **WHEREAS**, It is fitting and proper that this State join the list of
7 jurisdictions remembering the events of October 23, 1983 and the
8 241 members of the Armed Forces of the United States who died on
9 that day by establishing a special remembrance day in the State of
10 New Jersey; now, therefore,

12 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
13 *State of New Jersey:*

15 1. October 23rd of each year is designated as Beirut Barracks
16 Bombing Remembrance Day in the State of New Jersey.

2. The Governor shall annually issue a proclamation and call upon public officials, private organizations, and all citizens of this State to observe this remembrance each year with appropriate events and activities.

23 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

26 STATEMENT

28 This Joint Resolution designates October 23rd of each year as
29 Beirut Barracks Bombing Remembrance Day in the State of New
30 Jersey.