

December 13, 2022

Wyden, Merkley Applaud Passage of Legislation Awarding Congressional Gold Medal to Heroes Killed in 2012 Benghazi Consulate Attack

Family of Portlander Tyrone Woods to accept medal

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley today applauded the passage of bipartisan legislation awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods, J. Christopher Stevens, and Sean Smith in recognition of their service to defend the United States of America. Doherty, Woods, Stevens, and Smith were killed in the September 2012 attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya.

“Tyrone Woods was a native of Portland, Oregon, who died alongside Glen Doherty, J. Christopher Stevens, and Sean Smith to bravely defend our diplomats abroad,” Wyden said. **“These men are heroes and rightly deserve the Congressional Gold Medal for their distinguished service and sacrifice to our nation.”**

“The United States will never forget the legacy of Glen Doherty, J. Christopher Stevens, Sean Smith, and Portland’s own Tyrone Woods, and their heroic actions and sacrifices made in Benghazi on September 12, 2012,” Merkley said. **“These brave patriots laid down their lives in an act of heroism that should be recognized and honored for years to come. I am proud to join my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to properly honor these heroes, their service and their sacrifice.”**

The legislation honors Doherty, Woods, Stevens, and Smith for risking their lives to defend U.S. diplomats and the Consulate against an armed attack in Benghazi. Doherty, a former combat-decorated Navy SEAL, was a native of Winchester Massachusetts. Woods, a native of Portland, Oregon, was also a former combat-decorated Navy SEAL. Stevens was a member of the Career Foreign Service who served as U.S. Ambassador to Libya during the attack. Smith, a native of San Diego, served in the Air Force and was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal.

“It’s been eight years since the first resolutions were presented in the House and Senate to pass legislation honoring four civilian Americans who served their country with their ‘last full measure of devotion,’” said Cheryl Croft Bennett, the mother of Tyrone Woods. **“To my precious son, Tyrone, I say: ‘You were our example, my brave boy. Like you, we never gave up!’ Today, my heart is bursting with many feelings, and words fall empty as I try to express the overwhelming joy and elation I feel. Tyrone would never have asked for this recognition, but it is important to the families, as well as for many thousands of Americans, that these men finally receive the tribute they so genuinely deserve. All those who have worked tirelessly to reach this milestone have had my son’s ‘never quit’ attitude, especially Massachusetts Senators Ed Markey and Stephen Lynch. Special gratitude is owed to them for their leadership and relentless efforts in keeping this legislation viable in each congress. Thank you so much. I am also extremely grateful to Oregon Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley for their continued**

support. To each congressional co-sponsor, I am forever appreciative of your support as well. The epic legacy of Ambassador Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Glen Doherty, and my son, Tyrone Woods, will stand in American history as a compelling testimonial to the true meaning of courage, loyalty, and sacrifice in defense of others and our great Nation. It is fitting that we honor them with this award. They earned every gram of it.”

Representative Stephen F. Lynch (MA-08) introduced companion legislation in the House that successfully passed in July. Along with Wyden and Merkley, co-sponsors include Senators Ed Markey, D-Mass. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., Rob Portman, R-Ohio, Angus King, I-Maine, Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., John Hoeven, R-N.D., Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., Bob Casey, D-Pa., Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., Susan Collins, R-Maine, Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., Patty Murray, D-Wash., Chris Murphy, D-Conn., Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., Mike Rounds, R-S.D., Mark Warner, D-Va., Tom Cotton, R-Ark., Rick Scott, R-Fla., Catherine Cortez Masto, D-Nev., John Thune, R-S.D., Tim Scott, R-S.C., Josh Hawley, R-Mo., Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., Ben Cardin, D-Md., Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., James Lankford, R-Okla., Steve Daines, R-Mont., Deb Fischer, R-Neb., Roger Marshall, R-Kan., Cindy Hyde-Smith, R-Miss., Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., Dan Sullivan, R-Ark., Gary Peters, D-Mich., Marco Rubio, R-Fla., Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., John Boozman, R-Ark., Tim Kaine, D-Va., Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, Thom Tillis, R-N.C., Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., Raphael Warnock, R-Ga., Alex Padilla, D-Calif., Mark Kelly, D-Ariz., John Kennedy, R-La., Maggie Hassan, D-N.H., Dick Durbin, D-Ill., Richard Burr, R-N.C., Bill Hagerty, R-Tenn., Jerry Moran, R-Kan., Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, Jacky Rosen, D-Nev., Mazie Hirono, D-Hawai'i, Roy Blunt, R-Miss., Todd Young, R-Ind., Ted Cruz, R-Texas, Tina Smith, D-Minn., Chris Coons, D-Del., John Barasso, R-Wyo., Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., John Hickenlooper, D-Colo., Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., John Cornyn, R-Texas, Jon Tester, D-Mont., Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyo., and Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio.