Official Wreaths Across America State House Ceremony

***Opening at 12:00 noon Eastern Standard Time***

Good afternoon. Ladies and Gentlemen please join with me in a moment of silence to remember the fallen, the prisoners of war, the missing in action and honor those who have served and are serving this great nation’s armed services.

**:30 - :60 seconds of silence recommended**

***Color Guard:***

Ladies and Gentlemen, please stand while we post/present the colors.

“Color Guard, post/present the Colors.” *(Where Honor Guards are present and participating, they too will come forward and place themselves on both sides of the memorial to be decorated).* **Leaders will set this up in advance**.

*Note of clarity regarding posting vs. presenting, if the flags will be put into stands the command should be “post the colors,” if the color guard is to remain with the flags they should be directed to “present the colors.” The emcee should direct the audience to stand while the flag is moving. When outside, you should either salute or place your hand over your heart as the American flag passes by.*

***Opening Remarks:***

We are gathered here today at [this location] along with every other State across the country as one nation to Remember, Honor and Teach. We are all proud to be Americans that live in a free society made up of many people, from many walks of life. The freedoms we enjoy today have not come without a price. In cemeteries throughout this nation are men and women who gave their lives so that we can live in freedom and without fear. We can worship as we see fit. We can raise our children to believe as we do. We can travel from one end of this great nation to the other and not have to ask permission to go. We are free to vote for whomever we feel should be in government office, with no explanation needed. We have the right to succeed, and we have the right to fail at whatever endeavor we wish to pursue.

The United States of America was founded on the ideals of Freedom, Justice and Equality. Our Nation stands as a shining beacon of liberty and freedom to the world. We thank those who gave their lives to keep us free and we shall not forget you. We shall remember. (Short Pause)

Today, many of you here, are Veterans of wars and conflicts that America has had to fight to protect the innocent and oppressed. This nation has always been the first to stand up for the freedom of people from around the world. Many of you here today have answered that call and served your country well. We are here today to say, “Thank you” and we are honored to know you.

There are many men and women serving today in all branches of the military, here at home and in places far away that most of us have never heard of. These men and women are part of the best-trained, best-equipped force in the world. We honor them and their families for the sacrifices they make each day to keep our country safe from terrorism, hatred, and injustice. This year we’ve added an additional ceremonial wreath to honor the men and women currently serving in the U.S. Space Force along with those Veterans who have served in roles helping to secure our national interests in space.

Quoting our 40th United States President Ronald Reagan. Quote “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.” End Quote.

Today, we show a united front of gratitude and respect across the United States of America as we REMEMBER the Fallen, HONOR those who serve and TEACH our children the value of freedom.

***Wreath Laying: Color Guard and if present Honor Guard will present arms at the laying of the wreath.***

Now (Person’s Name) will lay a live balsam wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States armed forces.

***Notes:*** *If possible, an active-duty service person should lay the wreath of the armed services they represent. After the last wreath is laid the Color Guard and Honor Guard will Order Arms****.***

*If the Space Force is unable to provide a service member a Veteran of Air Force Space Command or U.S. Space Command is also appropriate*

**Closing Remarks:**

The wreaths before you represent our commitment as a United America to remember the fallen. We also want this wreath to symbolize our honor to those who have served and are serving in the armed forces of our great nation and to their families who endure sacrifices every day on our behalf. To our children, we want you to understand the freedoms you enjoy today have not been free but have come with a cost that someday, you may have to pay yourself. As a nation standing together, we can defeat terrorism, hatred, and injustice.

***This is where the scripted ceremony ends, and the Leader or other Designated person turns it over to the Veterans Groups.***

**Tips:**

Where there are high-ranking officials present (Governor, State Elected Officials, etc.) and who wish to make a statement (short) this is a good time to let them speak

**Veterans’ Groups:** Leaders, make sure you accommodate all groups that want to participate in the ceremony after the scripted ceremony. Try to lead them to keep it short and to the point.

**Ending:** At the conclusion, where possible, Have TAPS Played. Retire the Colors and thank everyone for coming.

**Location Coordinators:** As Coordinators, you oversee everything else that takes place at this memorial event. How your Color Guard is placed and/or Honor Guard is placed is entirely up to you. Memorials throughout the country are all different and we cannot script, nor do we want to script the entire ceremony. You are capable and a better judge of your command than we are. We will support you with ideas, if asked to provide them, to you or to other leaders in your group. Have fun with this project!

**Additional Ideas:** Before the beginning of the ceremony some groups have the participants recite the Pledge of Allegiance and play the National Anthem. This is your choice to do if desired.