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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American Legion praises Congress for passage of new Stolen Valor Act

WASHINGTON (May 23, 2013) – The American Legion is praising Congress for passing the new Stolen Valor Act, which addresses areas that were previously ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

The new Stolen Valor Act would make it a crime to profit from lies about military awards and decorations, as opposed to the previous law which criminalized the wearing of unearned medals. If signed into law by President Obama as expected, this act will cover issues ranging from lying to receive veteran or health care benefits, to obtaining a government contract only eligible for a veteran- or service-disabled veteran owned business, or getting a job reserved for a veteran.

“Last night the United States Senate voted to pass the House version of the Stolen Valor Act by unanimous consent,” said James E. Koutz, national commander of The American Legion. “Within days it will be the law of the land once again. The American Legion is proud to have aided in its passage, and would like to especially thank Senators (Dean) Heller and (Jon)Tester for sponsoring and shepherding the bill through the Senate, and Representative (Joe) Heck for doing the same in the House.”

Noting that only three of the 535 Members of Congress voted in opposition, Koutz praised Congress for the overwhelming bipartisanship displayed.

“It is appropriate that Congress would work together to pass this important legislation as Americans prepare to celebrate their cherished fallen heroes on this Memorial Day. Both Majority Leader (Harry) Reid and Speaker (John) Boehner ensured that it received a quick vote, and for that we are very appreciative. We are confident that the concerns of the Supreme Court have been addressed and that this bill will pass constitutional muster.”

Delegates to The American Legion’s National Convention last August unanimously passed Resolution No. 27, which called for passage of this legislation.

With a current membership of 2.4-million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 14,000 posts across the nation.

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Media contact: Marty Callaghan, (202)263-5758 / (202)215-8644 or Joe March, (317) 630-1253 / (317)748-1926, John Raughter, (317) 630-1350 / (317)441-8847.