June 29, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We, the members of the delegation from the State of New Jersey, request that you direct a state funeral for World War II (WWII) veteran, Corporal Hershel “Woody” Williams, United States Marine Corps. This effort would not only honor Corporal Williams, but also the 16 million other Americans who defended our nation and ideals in WWII. Corporal Williams of West Virginia was the last living WWII Medal of Honor recipient in the United States until he died this morning at the age of 98. We believe that Corporal Williams is deserving of this honor.

Over 560,000 New Jerseyans fought in WWII, with 10,372 ultimately sacrificing their lives for their country and only 16 earning the Medal of Honor. These 16 New Jerseyans exhibited exceptional valor and courage, and they represent the spirit of all the brave service members from our state whose devotion to duty and country must be remembered:

- John Basiline, USMC
- Frederick Castle, USAAC
- Martin May, USA
- Nicholas Minue, USA
- Joseph Sadowski, USA
- Peter Tomich, USN
- George Benjamin Jr., USA
- John Dutko, USA
- Francis McGraw, USA
- Nicholas Oresko, USA
- Franklin Sigler, USMC
- Francis Burke, USA
- Stephen Gregg, USA
- John Meagher, USA
- Carlton Rouh, USMC
- Horace Thorne, USA

Corporal Williams would not be the first to receive a state funeral to memorialize a group of service members. In 1921, the Unknown Soldier of World War I was interred in Arlington with a state funeral to recognize the collective sacrifice of all unidentified soldiers who had died in the war. This act was repeated in 1958 with the internment of Unknown Soldiers who fought and died in World War II and the Korean War.

The members of the New Jersey Congressional delegation below entreat you to designate a state funeral for Corporal Williams. He was an exemplary member of the Greatest Generation and he must be treated with the respect befitting WWII’s last decorated hero. We hope that you find our request appropriate and recognize the importance of honoring our nation’s most noble fallen.

Sincerely,

Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

Mikie Sherrill  
Member of Congress
Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Donald Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

Jeff Van Drew
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress

Andy Kim
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross
Member of Congress