

# CHAPTER 98-424

## House Bill No. 1893

An act relating to designation of state buildings; designating a state veterans' nursing home in Land O' Lakes, Pasco County, as the "Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home"; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs is in the process of constructing a second state veterans' nursing home in Land O' Lakes, Pasco County, Florida, and

WHEREAS, a committee chaired by Representative Mike Fasano and committee members Senator Jack Latvala, Hillsborough County Commissioner Chris Hart, Pasco County Commissioner Ed Collins, Hernando County Commissioner Ray Lossing, Pasco County Veterans' Service Officer Fred Harrop, and Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs General Counsel Ron Frankel considered nominations from the public for naming the new state veterans' nursing home, and

WHEREAS, the name of First Lieutenant Baldomero Lopez, a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, was placed in nomination and unanimously selected by the committee as the recommended name of the new state veterans' nursing home, and

WHEREAS, First Lieutenant Baldomero Lopez, U.S. Marine Corps, grew up in Tampa, Florida, and graduated from Hillsborough High School, and

WHEREAS, after graduation, Baldomero Lopez entered the U.S. Navy and was selected for an appointment at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, where he graduated in the upper third of his class, and was commissioned in the U.S. Marine Corps, and

WHEREAS, First Lieutenant Baldomero Lopez was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroic deeds on September 15, 1950, the day on which he gave his life for his country, and

WHEREAS, in action against enemy aggressor forces during the Inchon Invasion in Korea on September 15, 1950, First Lieutenant Lopez was leading his platoon against enemy beach defenses, and

WHEREAS, exposing himself to hostile fire, he moved forward alongside a bunker and prepared to throw a hand grenade into the next pillbox, whose fire was pinning down his sector of the beach, and

WHEREAS, taken under fire by an enemy automatic weapon and hit in the right shoulder and chest as he lifted his arm to throw the grenade, he fell backward and dropped the deadly missile, and

WHEREAS, after a moment, he turned and dragged his body forward in an effort to retrieve the grenade and throw it, and

WHEREAS, in critical condition from pain and loss of blood, and unable to grasp the hand grenade firmly enough to hurl it, he chose to sacrifice himself, rather than endanger the lives of his men, and with a sweeping motion of his wounded right arm, cradled the grenade under him and absorbed the full impact of the explosion, and

WHEREAS, for his exceptional courage, fortitude, and devotion to duty, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. The State Veterans' Nursing Home in Land O' Lakes, Pasco County, Florida, is hereby designated as the "Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home" in honor of First Lieutenant Baldomero Lopez.

Section 2. The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs is directed to erect appropriate markers designating the State Veterans' Nursing Home in Land O' Lakes as the "Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home."

Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor May 29, 1998.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 29, 1998.