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Recognizing the difficult challenges Black veterans faced when returning home after serving in the Armed Forces, their heroic military sacrifices, and their patriotism in fighting for equal rights and for the dignity of a people and a Nation.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 6, 2025

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER submitted the following concurrent resolution; which
was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Recognizing the difficult challenges Black veterans faced when returning home after serving in the Armed Forces, their heroic military sacrifices, and their patriotism in fighting for equal rights and for the dignity of a people and a Nation.

Whereas there has been no war fought by or within the United States in which Blacks did not participate, including the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, the War of 1812, the Spanish American War, World Wars I and II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom;

Whereas Frederick Douglass voiced his opinion on the civic value of military service in one of his autobiographies, “Life and Times of Frederick Douglass,” writing, “I . .

. urged every man who could, to enlist; to get an eagle on his button, a musket on his shoulder, the star-spangled banner over his head,” and later remarking that “there is no power on Earth which can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship in the United States”;

Whereas, during the Civil War, Black soldiers, commonly referred to as the United States Colored Troops, fought with honor and distinction despite being treated as second-class citizens;

Whereas the health care and hospitals available to Black soldiers during the Civil War were substandard, and Black soldiers often died from the withholding of services that were supposed to be administered by medical personnel;

Whereas Dr. W.E.B. DuBois and William Monroe Trotter, members of the “first generation of freedom’s children,” founded the Niagara Movement in 1905 and fought for desegregation in the Armed Forces in World War I;

Whereas, in his book, “Black Reconstruction in America,” published in 1935, DuBois recognized the importance of equity in military service writing that “Nothing else made Negro citizenship conceivable, but the record of the Negro soldier as a fighter.”;

Whereas the 369th Infantry, known as the Harlem Hellfighters, continued the history of distinguished military service despite treatment as second-class citizens, fighting the Germans during World War I as part of the French Army and serving the longest stretch in combat, 191 days without replacement and without losing a foot of ground or a man as prisoner;

Whereas, at the end of the service of the 369th Infantry, the entire regiment received the Croix de Guerre, which was

France’s highest military honor, from a grateful French nation;

Whereas, in 1917, Charles Hamilton Houston encountered racism after entering World War I as a commissioned first lieutenant in the segregated 17th Provisional Training Regiment, later writing that “I made up my mind that if I got through this war I would study law and use my time fighting for men who could not strike back.”;

Whereas Alain Locke, the first Black Rhodes Scholar, wrote in 1925 about a “New Negro” who had returned from battle with a bold new spirit that helped spark a new mood in the Black community;

Whereas, at the start of the United States involvement in World War II, Dorie Miller, a messman attendant in the Navy, was catapulted to national hero status and an icon to generations, after displaying heroism on board the USS West Virginia during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941;

Whereas the famed Tuskegee Airmen, a group of Black pilots, flew with distinction during World War II under the command of Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., the highly decorated officer who served for more than 35 years and became the first Black general in the Air Force;

Whereas, during World War II, the 6888 (known as the “Six Triple Eights”), the first postal battalion comprised exclusively of Black women, who served in England and then France, was given the daunting task of clearing out a 2-year backlog of more than 90,000 pieces of mail, completed the mission in 3 months, and went on to make a positive impact on racial integration in the Armed Forces;

Whereas, before becoming a famous baseball player, Jackie Robinson was court-martialed in the Army in 1944 for refusing to sit in the back of the bus, and when he was later acquitted, he wrote that “[i]t was a small victory, for I had learned that I was in two wars, one against the foreign enemy, the other against prejudice at home”;

Whereas, during World War II, the Army’s 92nd Infantry Division, better known as the “Buffalo Soldiers,” which traces its direct lineage back to the 9th and 10th Cavalry units from 1866 to the early 1890s, was the only Black segregated unit to experience combat during the Italian campaigns of 1944 and 1945, with several members of the unit later earning Medals of Honor for bravery;

Whereas Reverend Benjamin Hooks, who served in the 92nd Infantry Division, found himself in the humiliating position of guarding Italian prisoners of war who were allowed to eat in restaurants that were off-limits to him;

Whereas, even after President Truman issued Executive Order 9981, desegregating the military on July 26, 1948, discrimination continued;

Whereas Oliver L. Brown, a World War II Army veteran from Kansas, and Harry Briggs, a World War II sailor from South Carolina, were the fathers of 2 of the 5 named plaintiffs in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1952) and *Briggs v. Elliott*, 342 U.S. 350 (1952), the historic school-desegregation cases of 1952;

Whereas the Black heroes and heroines of World War II and the Korean War, and their offspring such as Private Sarah Keys and Women’s Army Corps officer Dovey Roundtree, won significant victories against discrimina-

tion in interstate transportation in landmark civil rights cases, including *Keys v. Carolina Coach Company*, 64 MCC 769 (1955), which was decided 6 days before Rosa Parks' historic protest of Alabama's Jim Crow laws in Montgomery;

Whereas, after serving overseas in the Army, Charles and Medgar Evers returned home to Mississippi, where in 1946, they tried to register to vote but were turned away at the polling stations;

Whereas, in 1952, Charles and Medgar Evers began to organize voter registration drives for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP);

Whereas, in his address at Riverside Church on April 4, 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., commented on the irony of Blacks fighting in Vietnam to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia while not enjoying the same rights at home;

Whereas Black veterans who were in the forefront of the leadership of the civil rights movement, with their strong resolve to address the paradox of military service abroad and the denial of basic rights at home, brought deeper meaning to the word "democracy," and through their example, transformed the face of the United States;

Whereas Black veterans of the Nation's wars sowed the seeds for today's bountiful harvest that includes the Niagara Movement, the NAACP, and the modern-day civil rights movement, all of which share a common ancestry in the Civil War, without which there would be no civil rights movement and no equal rights for all Americans; and

Whereas Black veterans suffer at a disproportionate rate from chronic illnesses and homelessness and are plagued by health disparities: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
2 *concurring)*, That Congress recognizes—

3 (1) the difficult challenges Black veterans faced
4 when returning home after serving in the Armed
5 Forces, their heroic military sacrifices, and their pa-
6 triotism in fighting for equal rights and for the dig-
7 nity of a people and a Nation; and

8 (2) the need for the Department of Veterans
9 Affairs to continue to work to eliminate any health
10 and benefit disparities for minority veterans in the
11 United States.

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