

Legislation Text

File #: 160296, **Version:** 0

Recognizing and honoring the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. for the 75th Anniversary of the Activation of the Tuskegee Airmen Squadron.

WHEREAS, The formation of an African-American pursuit squadron based in Tuskegee, Alabama in 1941 was the first step in putting an end to the exclusion of blacks from flying in the military. This squadron, eventually known as the Tuskegee Airmen, was comprised of dedicated and determined young men who enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps. They stand as the first group of African-American fighter pilots and personnel to fight during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Of the 994 pilots trained at Tuskegee, 450 were sent overseas to conduct more than 1,200 missions for the 99th, 100th, 301st and 302nd Fighter Squadrons under the 12th and 15th Air Forces. In total, the 99th Fighter Squadron and the 332nd Fighter Group had over 112 aerial victories during World War II. From 1941 through 1946, approximately 15,000 black men and women trained at Tuskegee and performed air and ground-crew duties during wartime; and

WHEREAS, Upon orders from the Commander of the 15th Air Force, the Airmen painted the tails of their planes red; thus earning the nickname "Red Tails" or "Red-Tail Angels"; and

WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Airmen overcame adversity and the detrimental stereotypes of Jim Crow America to serve as pilots, aircrews and ground support personnel in the military; and

WHEREAS, On March 29, 2007, the Tuskegee Airmen were recognized by President Bush and Congress for their outstanding service and contributions in defeating the Axis powers while fighting prejudice and racial segregation at home. They were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest honor, due to their exemplary combat record. It was that record which inspired Harry Truman to eliminate racial divides in the military services and paved the way for full integration of the U.S. military; and

WHEREAS, The Greater Philadelphia Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. preserves the legacy of all Tuskegee Airmen by continuing to be leaders and role models in overcoming bias and prejudice towards minorities and the underprivileged in the world of aviation, the military and society in general. Their Annual Scholarship Benefit provides scholarships to first-year students entering college, proving their commitment to continue inspiring and encouraging others to build a future for themselves through education; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia is grateful for the sacrifices, accomplishments and contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen. Furthermore, the City is thankful that the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. continues to carry a legacy of courage and commitment to issues of social justice and equality; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby recognizes and honors the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. for the 75th Anniversary of the Activation of the Tuskegee Airmen Squadron.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., further evidencing the sincere admiration and gratitude of this legislative body.