

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and Congratulating the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen.

WHEREAS, In 1939, mobilization pressures on the Roosevelt administration and Congress led to the passage of Public Law 18, formerly the Civilian Pilot Training Act. This Act, sponsored by the Civil Aeronautics Authority, established the Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP), which created a reserve of civilian pilots available in the event of a war emergency; and

WHEREAS, It was through this program that six segregated CPTP centers were established at African-American colleges in the south, the West Virginia State College for Negroes, Howard University in Washington, D.C., Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, Hampton Institute in Virginia, Delaware State College for Colored Students and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College; and

WHEREAS, In spite of adversity and limited opportunities, African Americans have played a significant role in U.S. military history over the past 300 years. They were denied military leadership roles and skilled training because many believed they lacked qualifications for combat duty; and

WHEREAS, Before 1940, African Americans were barred from flying for the U.S. military. Civil rights organizations and the black press exerted pressure that resulted in the formation of an all African-American pursuit squadron based in Tuskegee, Alabama, in 1941. They became known as the Tuskegee Airmen; and

WHEREAS, "Tuskegee Airmen" refers to all who were involved in the so-called "Tuskegee Experience," the Army Air Corps program to train African Americans to fly and maintain combat aircrafts. The Tuskegee Airmen included pilots, navigators, bombardiers, maintenance and support staff, instructors, and the personnel who kept the planes in the air; and

WHEREAS, The Tuskegee program expanded and became the center for African-American aviation during World War II; and

WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Airmen overcame segregation and prejudice to become one of the most highly respected fighter groups of World War II. They proved conclusively that African Americans could fly and maintain sophisticated combat aircraft. The Tuskegee Airmen's achievements, together with the men and women who supported them, paved the way for full integration of the U.S. military; and

WHEREAS, On November 6, 1998, President Clinton approved Public Law 105-355, which established the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site at Moton Field in Tuskegee, Alabama, to commemorate and honor the heroic actions of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II; and

WHEREAS, The mission of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen is to keep the legacy and camaraderie of the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II alive. It is also about the education and training that prepared them for military service, combat and their war-time record which changed a nation. The Tuskegee Airmen's story inspires others in similar straits and encourages youth to build a future for themselves through

education by emphasizing determination, courage, refusal to accept limits and the ability to seize opportunity; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby recognize and congratulate the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen for overcoming adversity and defeating the challenge of stereotypes by encouraging youth to build a future for themselves through education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be provided to Harriett J. Bryant, President of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen.