

MICHIGAN SENATE

Senate Resolution No. 24

Offered by Senators Santana, Chang, Cavanagh, McCann, Wojno, Damoose, Klinefelt, Cherry, Bumstead, Outman, Huizenga, Irwin, McMorrow, Bayer, Singh, Lauwers, Geiss, Johnson and Theis

A RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE MARCH 23, 2023, AS TUSKEGEE AIRMEN DAY

WHEREAS, In 1925, The United States Army War College issued a grossly inaccurate and disparaging official report intending to relegate African Americans to menial duty positions in the military; and

WHEREAS, By the time the United States was drawn into World War II (WWII), more African Americans were receiving higher education and aspiring for more meaningful jobs in the military, including airplane pilots; and

WHEREAS, The rapid expansion of aircraft production to meet the demand for air power during WWII created a need for military pilots; and

WHEREAS, The public outcry from the African American population, media, and fair-minded people of all races resulted in the United States Department of War extending the opportunity to fly airplanes to all military members, regardless of race; and

WHEREAS, The War Department's Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) Program authorized colleges and universities to train civilian students to increase the number of civilian pilots, thereby contributing to military preparedness; and

WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Institute in Alabama was one of six African American colleges and universities chosen to participate in the CPT Program, and helped open the door for the first African American military pilots; and

WHEREAS, During WWII, from January 1941-July 1949, both men and women participated in the Tuskegee Experience in Tuskegee, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Airmen flew more than 15,000 sorties, destroyed over 1,000 German aircraft, received hundreds of Air Medals, more than 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, and lost very few bomber aircraft to enemy air action during escort missions; and

WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Airmen's outstanding performance record was unprecedented in military aviation history and disproves every adverse and prejudiced contention barring African Americans from becoming pilots; and

WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Airmen overcame segregation and prejudice to become one of the most prestigious, decorated, and respected fighting groups of WWII; and

WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Airmen of the 332nd Fighter Group were based at Selfridge Field in Mt. Clemens and Oscoda Army Air Field. Fifteen Tuskegee Airmen pilots lost their lives on training exercises in Michigan; and

WHEREAS, More than 52 service members from Michigan served as Tuskegee Airmen during WWII; and

WHEREAS, From August 11-13, 1972, the Tuskegee Airmen Organization was formed in the basement of original Tuskegee Airmen, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Jefferson, in Detroit; and

WHEREAS, In the United States, there are 62 Tuskegee Airmen chapters. On March 6, 1973, the Detroit chapter became the founding incorporated chapter. In 2012, an additional chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen was formed in West Bloomfield, Michigan to reach youth in Detroit; and

WHEREAS, In Michigan, on August 6, 1986, the Tuskegee Airmen National Historical Museum was incorporated; and

WHEREAS, March was the month the first cadets received their silver wings, the first maintenance crew began training at Chanute Field, Illinois, and the 99th Pursuit Squadron was activated. On March 29, 2007, President George W. Bush also presented the Tuskegee Airmen the Congressional Gold Medal; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, That the members of this legislative body recognize March 23, 2023, as Tuskegee Airmen Day. We encourage citizens to commemorate the heroic men and women who served as Tuskegee Airmen.

Adopted by the Senate, March 23, 2023.



Secretary of the Senate