

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 24

Senators Santana, Chang, Cavanagh, McCann, Wojno, Damoose, Klinefelt, Cherry, Bumstead, Outman, Huizenga, Irwin, McMorrow, Bayer, Singh and Lauwers offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to recognize March 23, 2023, as Tuskegee Airmen
2 Day.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative
23 body recognize March 23, 2023, as Tuskegee Airmen Day. We encourage
24 citizens to commemorate the heroic men and women who served as
25 Tuskegee Airmen.