

**No. R-339. House concurrent resolution honoring the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II.**

(H.C.R.260)

Offered by: Representative Christie of Hartford

Whereas, despite the racial restrictions that kept the U.S. Armed Forces segregated until 1948, from 1940 to 1946, the Tuskegee Airmen, the first U.S. Black military aviators, flew and fought valiantly during World War II, and

Whereas, their saga began when the 99th Pursuit Squadron was activated at Chanute Field in Rantoul, Illinois, on March 19, 1941; and, in June 1941, the squadron was transferred to Tuskegee Army Airfield in Alabama, and

Whereas, the Black airmen of the 99th were under the command of Captain Benjamin O. Davis Jr., one of only two Black U.S. Army line officers then serving, and

Whereas, in April 1943, the 99th was transferred to North Africa; assigned to the 33rd Fighter Group; flew its inaugural mission on May 30, 1943, attacking the small island of Pantelleria off the Italian coast; and the squadron subsequently flew combat missions over Sicily, and

Whereas, by January 1944, the 100th, 301st, and 302nd Fighter Squadrons of Tuskegee Airmen arrived in the war zone and were transferred to the 332nd Fighter Group, ultimately under the command of now-Colonel Benjamin O. Davis Jr., and

Whereas, the 332nd was stationed at the Ramitelli Airfield on Italy's Adriatic coast and initially conducted dive-bombing and strafing missions, and

Whereas, from June 1944 to March 1945, the 332nd escorted and protected the Fifteenth Air Force's heavy bombers flying over Nazi Germany, and when the 332nd was issued P-51 Mustang Fighters marked with red paint on the aircrafts' tails, the pilots became famously known as the Red Tails, and

Whereas, in total, the Tuskegee Airmen flew 15,533 combat sorties on 1,578 missions; 55 of the pilots were credited with destroying 112 German aircraft in the air; three Distinguished Unit Citations were awarded; 66 pilots were killed in action or accidents; and, overall, 150 died and 32 were captured and held as prisoners of war, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Friends of Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site in Tuskegee, Alabama.