

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 24

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

1 including airplane pilots; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 Whereas, The Tuskegee Airmen overcame segregation and
29 prejudice to become one of the most prestigious, decorated, and

1 respected fighting groups of WWII; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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