

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Congress of the United States to create a task force
2 to review the records of minority service members who served
3 in World War I to determine if they were denied the Medal of
4 Honor or other valor awards due to discrimination and create
5 legislation that will lift statutes of limitations preventing
6 this important and necessary review.

7 WHEREAS, Award reviews for minority service members of other
8 wartime engagements have been conducted by the United States
9 military; and

10 WHEREAS, Each branch of the armed services of the United
11 States has regulations in place that permit no margin of error
12 in deciding whether a service member is deserving of the Medal
13 of Honor; and

14 WHEREAS, The act committed by the service member must have
15 conspicuously distinguished the service member by gallantry and
16 intrepidity at the risk of their life above and beyond the call
17 of duty in the following situations:

18 (1) while engaged in an action against an enemy of the
19 United States;

1 (2) while engaged in military operations involving
2 conflict with an opposing foreign force; or

3 (3) while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged
4 in an armed conflict against an opposing force in which the
5 United States is not a belligerent party;

6 and

7 WHEREAS, Two posthumous Medal of Honor bestowals to Corporal
8 Freddie Stowers and Sergeant Henry Johnson, challenge the claims
9 of there being no black and few other minority Medal of Honor
10 recipients; and

11 WHEREAS, Minorities who served with valor during World War I
12 deserve our due diligence in acknowledging their service; and

13 WHEREAS, Of the 225 Medal of Honor awards presented to World
14 War I service members, only two were awarded to African-American
15 service members and one was awarded to a Hispanic-American
16 service member; and

17 WHEREAS, The American Legion, along with volunteers, is
18 planning to review the records of approximately 70 African-
19 American service members who may have been denied the Medal of
20 Honor or other valor awards; and

21 WHEREAS, Of those 70 African-American service members, eight
22 were nominated for a Medal of Honor; and

23 WHEREAS, The eight African-American service members had been
24 nominated for the award because their chain of command knew that
25 they committed an act that conspicuously distinguished
26 themselves by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of their
27 life above and beyond the call of duty; and

28 WHEREAS, Although their chain of command felt that they
29 distinguished themselves beyond the call of duty, none of those
30 eight African-American nominees were awarded the Medal of Honor

1 until the 1990s; and

2 WHEREAS, Of the eight African-American nominees, only two
3 were awarded the Medal of Honor, posthumously, in 1991 and 2015
4 after prior valor award reviews; and

5 WHEREAS, Researchers at Park University in Parkville,
6 Missouri, are reviewing the records of approximately 40,000
7 African-American troops who fought in combat during World War I;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, In addition to the African-American troops of World
10 War I, Park University researchers plan to eventually look into
11 the records of other minority groups, including Asian Americans,
12 Hispanic Americans, Jewish Americans and Native Americans; and

13 WHEREAS, At the time of consideration, the award criteria was
14 race-neutral when determining whether the service member
15 qualified for the particular valor award; and

16 WHEREAS, Due to prejudices and racial discrimination, many
17 minorities were not granted the same considerations for a valor
18 award when reviewing their actions and bravery during their
19 service in World War I; and

20 WHEREAS, It is important and necessary to research and
21 rightfully award minority service members valor awards for their
22 distinguished service during which they risked their lives and
23 went above and beyond the call of duty, reflecting honorably on
24 their units, the United States Armed Forces and their country;
25 and

26 WHEREAS, The American Legion adopted Resolution 109 in 2018
27 requesting legislation that would lift the statutes of
28 limitations preventing proper review of the records of minority
29 service members for their consideration of valor awards for
30 their service in World War I; therefore be it

1 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the
2 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania urge the Congress of the United
3 States to create a task force to review the records of minority
4 service members who served in World War I to determine if they
5 were denied the Medal of Honor or other valor awards due to
6 discrimination and create legislation that will lift statutes of
7 limitations preventing this important and necessary review; and
8 be it further

9 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to
10 the President of the United States, the presiding officers of
11 each house of Congress and to each member of Congress from
12 Pennsylvania.