

HM 1087

2013

1 House Memorial

2 A memorial to the President and the Congress of the
3 United States, urging Congress and the President to
4 award the Congressional Gold Medal to the United
5 States 65th Infantry Regiment, the Borinqueneers.

6
7 WHEREAS, the United States 65th Infantry Regiment, the
8 Borinqueneers, traces its lineage to the "Puerto Rican Regiment
9 U.S. Volunteers," which was authorized by Congress on March 2,
10 1899, as a mounted battalion consisting of four companies, and

11 WHEREAS, after Puerto Rico patriotically requested that the
12 selective service draft law be extended to Puerto Rico as the
13 United States entered the conflict in World War I, the
14 Borinqueneers rallied a force of nearly 2,000, defending the
15 Panama Canal, firing on the German supply ship Odenwald from El
16 Morro Castle in Puerto Rico, and fighting valiantly on a number
17 of fronts for liberty, and

18 WHEREAS, during World War II, the Borinqueneers gallantly
19 served in North Africa and Europe, winning the Naples-Foggian,
20 Rome-Arno, Central Europe, and Rhineland battle campaign awards,
21 and, after the war, were assigned dangerous security, anti-
22 sabotage, and other occupation missions around Kaiserslautern
23 and Mannheim, Germany, making them one of the last units to
24 return home at war's end, and

25 WHEREAS, during the Korean War, some 61,000 Puerto Rican
26 soldiers served with the United States Army, 6,000 of them with
27 the Borinqueneers, which, again, covered themselves in glory,
28 distinguishing themselves over a 3-year period with nine Korean

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29 battle campaign awards, the Presidential and Meritorious Unit
30 commendations, two Korean Presidential Unit citations, the Greek
31 Gold Medal, the Navy Unit commendation, and many other awards
32 for bravery, and launching the last regimental bayonet assault
33 in United States Army history, and

34 WHEREAS, the Borinqueneers were awarded nine battle
35 campaign awards for bravery between 1950 and 1953 and, in World
36 War I, World War II, and the Korean War, combined, were awarded
37 10 Distinguished Service Crosses, 258 Silver Stars, 628 Bronze
38 Stars, more than 2,700 Purple Hearts, and many other individual
39 awards, and

40 WHEREAS, legendary United States Army General Douglas
41 MacArthur lauded the gallantry of the Borinqueneers, crediting
42 them with a resolute will to victory and invincible loyalty to
43 the United States, saying, "They write a brilliant record of
44 achievement in battle and I am proud indeed to have them in this
45 command. I wish that we might have many more like them!" and

46 WHEREAS, in 1959, the Borinqueneers passed their colors to
47 the National Guard of the United States Territory of Puerto
48 Rico, the only time in United States Army history that active
49 unit colors were not retired, but, instead, turned over to a
50 National Guard unit, and

51 WHEREAS, today, the legacy of the Borinqueneers lives on in
52 the National Guard in Puerto Rico, which continues to bravely
53 defend the United States in the ongoing War on Terrorism, and

54 WHEREAS, many of those who returned to civilian life after
55 serving with the Borinqueneers have gone on to serve in
56 leadership positions as respected businessmen, corporate

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57 | executives, religious leaders, lawyers, doctors, educators,
58 | bankers, and political leaders, and

59 | WHEREAS, the Borinqueneers selflessly served and
60 | sacrificed, shedding blood for our democracy and helping to
61 | ensure our prosperity as they, themselves, faced segregation,
62 | discrimination, and unequal American citizenship, always loyally
63 | protecting our nation and nobly fighting for the good of all,
64 | and

65 | WHEREAS, these brave warriors, the Borinqueneers, deserve a
66 | place with all American heroes, and should be honored,
67 | commended, and never forgotten for their epic feats, and

68 | WHEREAS, the Congressional Gold Medal, along with the
69 | Presidential Medal of Freedom, are the highest civilian awards
70 | in the United States, awarded to persons who have performed an
71 | achievement that has an impact on American history and culture
72 | that is likely to be recognized as a major achievement in the
73 | recipient's field long after the achievement, NOW, THEREFORE,

74 |
75 | Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

76 |
77 | That, in recognition of the bravery and sacrifice of the
78 | United States 65th Infantry Regiment, the Borinqueneers, the
79 | President and the Congress of the United States are urged to
80 | award the Congressional Gold Medal to these true heroes and
81 | defenders of our great nation.

82 | BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
83 | dispatched to the President of the United States, to the
84 | President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the

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85 | United States House of Representatives, to each member of the
86 | Florida delegation to the United States Congress, to the Puerto
87 | Rico Resident Commissioner, to the President of the United
88 | States 65th Infantry Regiment Association, the chairman of the
89 | Hispanic Achievers Grant Council, and the chairman of the
90 | Borinqueneers Congressional Gold Medal Alliance.