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Senate Memorial

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

WHEREAS, the Borinqueneers trace their lineage to the "Puerto Rico Regiment of Volunteer Infantry," authorized by Congress on March 2, 1899, as the first body of native troops in Puerto Rico, the only Hispanic-segregated unit in the United States Armed Forces that played a prominent role in American military history, and

WHEREAS, during World War I, the Borinqueneers rallied a force of over 1,500 to defend the Panama Canal, and upon their return to Puerto Rico were renamed "The 65th Infantry Regiment," and

WHEREAS, during World War II, the Borinqueneers served in North Africa and Europe, winning Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arne, Central Europe, and Rhineland battle campaign awards; and were assigned security, anti-sabotage, and other occupation missions around Kaiserslautern and Mannheim, Germany after the war, and

WHEREAS, during the Korean War, the Borinqueneers were the only all-Hispanic unit; joined the United States 3rd Infantry Division to be among the first infantry to engage in battle with North Korean troops; served with distinction to earn 4 Distinguished Service Crosses, 124 Silver Stars, 9 Korean battle campaign awards, the Presidential and Meritorious Unit Commendations, 2 Korean Presidential Unit Citations, and the Greek Gold Medal for Bravery; and are credited with launching

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30 the last recorded battalion-sized bayonet assault in United
31 States Army history, and

32 WHEREAS, legendary United States Army General Douglas
33 MacArthur lauded the Borinqueneers, crediting them with a
34 resolute will to victory and loyalty to the United States,
35 saying, "They are writing a brilliant record of heroism in
36 battle and I am indeed proud to have them under my command. I
37 wish that we could count on many more like them," and

38 WHEREAS, in 1959, the Borinqueneers passed their colors to
39 the National Guard of the United States Territory of Puerto
40 Rico, withdrawing from the Regular Army, the only time in United
41 States Army history that active unit colors were not retired,
42 but, instead, turned over to a National Guard unit, and

43 WHEREAS, today, the legacy of the Borinqueneers lives on in
44 the National Guard in Puerto Rico, which continues to defend the
45 United States in the ongoing War on Terrorism, and

46 WHEREAS, the Borinqueneers served and sacrificed, shedding
47 blood for our democracy and helping to ensure our prosperity as
48 they faced segregation and discrimination, protecting our nation
49 and fighting for the good of all, and

50 WHEREAS, these warriors, the Borinqueneers, deserve a place
51 with all American heroes, and should be honored, commended, and
52 never forgotten for their feats, and

53 WHEREAS, the Congressional Gold Medal is the highest
54 civilian award given by the United States Congress, awarded as
55 an expression of public gratitude on behalf of the nation for
56 distinguished contributions, NOW, THEREFORE,

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58 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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60 That, in recognition of the bravery and sacrifice of the
61 United States 65th Infantry Regiment, the Borinqueneers, the
62 President and the Congress of the United States are urged to
63 award the Congressional Gold Medal to these true heroes and
64 defenders of our great nation.

65 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
66 dispatched to the President of the United States, to the
67 President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the
68 United States House of Representatives, to each member of the
69 Florida delegation to the United States Congress, to the Puerto
70 Rico Resident Commissioner, to the President of the United
71 States 65th Infantry Regiment Association, the chairman of the
72 Hispanic Achievers Grant Council, the chairman of the
73 Borinqueneers Congressional Gold Medal Alliance, and the
74 National Association for Uniformed Services.