

By Senator Wright

14-00717B-20

20201912__

Senate Resolution

A resolution recognizing the fourth Thursday in March as "Tuskegee Airmen Commemoration Day" in Florida to honor the outstanding service of the Tuskegee Airmen to their country.

WHEREAS, before World War II, discriminatory policies restricted the service of African Americans in the United States Armed Forces, and African Americans were excluded from serving in the field of military aviation, and

WHEREAS, by the time that the United States was drawn into World War II, African Americans had long aspired to fully serve and protect their country in the military, including in the field of aviation, and

WHEREAS, the rapid expansion of aircraft production and use during the war created a greater need for military pilots, leading to a public call on the War Department to extend the opportunity to fly aircraft to all servicemembers, regardless of race, and

WHEREAS, to meet the need for pilots, the United States War Department's Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP) authorized colleges, universities, and flight schools to train students to fly and maintain military aircraft, thereby increasing the nation's military preparedness, and

WHEREAS, the Tuskegee Institute, now Tuskegee University, in Alabama was one of six historically black colleges and universities chosen to participate in the CPTP and was later selected to offer advanced CPTP training and to serve as the sole training site for African-American military pilots, and

14-00717B-20

20201912__

30 WHEREAS, more than 15,000 men and women were involved in
31 what was then referred to as the "Tuskegee Experience," in which
32 African Americans trained to fly and maintain combat aircraft,
33 and

34 WHEREAS, the Tuskegee Airmen—the pilots, navigators,
35 bombardiers, maintenance and support staff, and instructors who
36 trained at the Tuskegee Institute—served bravely and effectively
37 in the war, at times exceeding the success rates of other Air
38 Force squadrons, and

39 WHEREAS, the month of March holds a special place in the
40 history of the Tuskegee Airmen, for it was in March that the
41 first cadets received their wings; the first maintenance crew
42 began training at Chanute Field in Illinois; the first Pursuit
43 Squadron, the 99th, was activated; and President George W. Bush
44 presented the Tuskegee Airmen with the Congressional Gold Medal
45 in 2007, and

46 WHEREAS, many Tuskegee Airmen have direct connections to
47 this state, NOW, THEREFORE,

48

49 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

50

51 That the fourth Thursday in March is recognized as
52 "Tuskegee Airmen Commemoration Day" in Florida to honor the
53 outstanding service of the Tuskegee Airmen to their country.