

Second Regular Session
Seventy-fifth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. R26-0756.01 Frank Stoner x5498

HJR26-1007

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Stewart K. and Suckla,

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Gonzales J. and Simpson,

House Committees

Senate Committees

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 26-1007

101 **CONCERNING HONORING AND RECOGNIZING THE MILITARY SERVICE**
102 **AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS AND**
103 **COMMUNITIES.**

1 WHEREAS, The contributions, sacrifices, and disproportionate
2 service of Native American veterans has been integral to the success of
3 the United States military over the course of its history; and

4 WHEREAS, The Colorado General Assembly recognizes that we
5 are on the Indigenous land of the Arapahoe and Cheyenne, and the state
6 of Colorado also encompasses the native lands of the Ute, Ute Mountain
7 Ute, and Navajo, and that settling on the land came at great cost to the
8 Native American people, including suppression of culture and being
9 confined to reservations; and

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

1 WHEREAS, The Indigenous peoples of this land embody a
2 warrior spirit. Tribal warrior traditions; treaty commitments with the
3 United States; the opportunity to demonstrate patriotism; and pursuit of
4 employment, education, or adventure, as well as a responsibility for
5 defending Native American homelands, serve as a call to Indigenous
6 military service; and

7 WHEREAS, Native American veterans have served with
8 distinction in the United States military in every major conflict for over
9 200 years, earning Purple Hearts, Bronze Stars, Silver Stars,
10 Congressional Gold Medals, the Congressional Medal of Honor, and
11 other medals, awards, and decorations; and

12 WHEREAS, During the Revolutionary War, the Penobscot Nation
13 and Passamaquoddy Tribe heeded General George Washington's call on
14 December 24, 1776, for supplemental troops for his army by sending 600
15 of their own to fight on behalf of the American Revolution; and

16 WHEREAS, During the American Civil War, roughly 3,600
17 Native Americans served in the Union Army; and

18 WHEREAS, More than 12,000 Native Americans served in World
19 War I, many of whom were not conscripted but had volunteered to serve
20 despite the fact that one-third of all Native Americans still had not been
21 granted full citizenship by the United States government at the time; and

22 WHEREAS, Over one-third of able-bodied Native American men
23 between the ages of 18 and 50, and as much as 70 percent of certain tribal
24 populations, served during World War II, representing the highest per
25 capita contribution to the total war effort of any demographic group in the
26 United States; and

27 WHEREAS, The United States World War II mobilization efforts
28 infringed on several Native American reservations; diminished the
29 influence of the Bureau of Indian Affairs within Congress by moving its
30 Washington, DC office to Chicago; cut funding for Native American
31 programs; and caused a shortage of nurses and doctors on reservations as
32 medical professionals joined military operations; and

33 WHEREAS, The Choctaw Indians, largely without American
34 citizenship status, pioneered the use of Native American languages to
35 encode United States military communications while stationed at

1 battlefield command posts, successfully protecting United States and
2 Allied troops, supply locations, and plans from enemy intelligence;
3 ensuring the security of Allied resources and Allied lives; and
4 contributing to the Allied victory in World War I; and

5 WHEREAS, Over 400 Native Americans served integral roles in
6 World War II as "Code Talkers", employing their knowledge of Navajo
7 and other Native American languages-which languages the United States
8 government attempted to suppress in boarding schools where Native
9 American youth were forbidden from, and even beaten for, speaking their
10 languages-to develop unbreakable codes to send messages across the
11 Pacific; and

12 WHEREAS, During World War II, more than 33 tribes were
13 represented among those who contributed to the war effort as Code
14 Talkers, including the Cherokee Nation, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe,
15 Choctaw Nation, Comanche Nation, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Crow
16 Nation, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe, Fort Peck
17 Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes, Ho-Chunk Nation, Hopi Tribe, Kiowa
18 Tribe, Menominee Nation, Meskwaki Nation, Muscogee (Creek) Nation,
19 Oglala Sioux Tribe, Oneida Nation, Osage Nation, Pawnee Nation, Ponca
20 Tribe, Pueblo of Acoma Tribe, Pueblo of Laguna Tribe, Rosebud Sioux
21 Tribe, Santee Sioux Nation, Seminole Nation, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate
22 (Sioux) Tribe, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe,
23 Tlingit Tribe, Tonto Apache Tribe, White Mountain Apache Tribe,
24 Yankton Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, and Cheyenne and
25 Arapaho Tribes; and

26 WHEREAS, Navajo Code Talkers contributed to every Pacific
27 Marine-led assault from 1942 to 1945, including Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal,
28 Tarawa, and Peleliu, and in 2001, 28 Navajo Code Talkers received
29 Congressional Gold Medals, mostly posthumously; and

30 WHEREAS, Two Native American men were involved in the
31 famous raising of the flags over Iwo Jima: Louis Charles Charlo, from the
32 Bitterroot Salish Tribe of Montana, helped raise the first flag flown over
33 the island, and Ira Hayes Prima of Arizona helped raise the second, when
34 the moment was famously immortalized on film; and

35 WHEREAS, 42,000 Native Americans served in the Vietnam War,
36 over 90 percent of them volunteers, and the names of 232 Native
37 Americans and Alaska Natives who were killed in combat or went

1 missing in action are etched on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in
2 Washington, DC; and

3 WHEREAS, Over 10,000 Native Americans served in the Korean
4 War, and 194 were killed in combat; and

5 WHEREAS, There are about 60 Southern Ute veterans who served
6 in the United States military, including during World War I, World War
7 II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Persian Gulf War; and

8 WHEREAS, Multiple generations of Colorado Indigenous peoples
9 gave their lives in service to their country, including the Baker and Box
10 families of the Southern Ute Tribe; and

11 WHEREAS, The Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Tribes serve
12 an integral leadership role in the United Veterans Coalition of Colorado;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Roughly 31,000 Native Americans and Alaska
15 Natives are currently on active duty, serving around the world, in which
16 they continue to serve in greater numbers per capita than any other
17 demographic group; and

18 WHEREAS, Native American women serve in our Armed Forces
19 at disproportionately high rates; and

20 WHEREAS, Colorado made history in March of 2024 when
21 Governor Jared Polis appointed Howard Richards, Sr. of the Southern Ute
22 Indian Tribe to serve as the first Native veteran on the Colorado Board of
23 Veterans Affairs; and

24 WHEREAS, Native American veterans experience higher rates of
25 homelessness and substance abuse than other groups and face limited
26 access to medical care due to the shortcomings of the United States
27 Department of Veterans Affairs in administering culturally sensitive
28 treatment and establishing facilities within accessible distances to rural
29 reservations; now, therefore,

30 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-fifth*
31 *General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein:*

32 (1) That we, the members of the General Assembly, honor the

1 disproportionately high military service, sacrifice, and patriotism of
2 Native American veterans;

3 (2) That we recognize the indispensable contributions of Native
4 Americans in advancing United States interests, military successes, and
5 global stability, often as the United States government failed to fulfill its
6 federal trust responsibility and protect tribal treaty rights, lands, and
7 resources; and

8 (3) That we commit to addressing the unique hardships and
9 inequities faced by Native American veterans, service members, and Gold
10 Star families, as well as upholding our nation's solemn responsibilities to
11 support the Indigenous communities and tribes that continue to serve our
12 country as they have since our nation's founding.