

**First Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. R23-0841.01 Michael Dohr x4347

HJR23-1011

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Bacon and Sharbini,

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Gonzales and Simpson,

House Committees

Senate Committees

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 23-1011

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 securing the land came at great cost to the
8 Native people, including suppression of culture and being confined to
9 reservations; and
10

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 people of this land embody a warrior
2 spirit. Tribal warrior traditions; treaty commitments with the United
3 States; the opportunity to demonstrate patriotism; and pursuit of
4 employment, education, or adventure, as well as a responsibility for
5 defending Native homelands, serve as a call to indigenous military
6 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 and
13 Passamaquoddy Tribes 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, The Choctaw Indians, largely without American
23 citizenship status, pioneered the use of Native American languages to
24 encode United States military communications while stationed at
25 battlefield command posts, successfully protecting United States and
26 Allied troops, supply locations, and plans from enemy intelligence;
27 ensuring the security of Allied resources and Allied lives; and
28 contributing to the Allied victory in World War I; and

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

34 WHEREAS, The United States World War II mobilization efforts
35 infringed on several Native American reservations; diminished the

1 influence of the Bureau of Indian Affairs within Congress by moving its
2 Washington, DC office to Chicago; cut funding for Native American
3 programs; and caused a shortage of nurses and doctors on reservations as
4 medical professionals joined military operations; and

5 WHEREAS, Over 400 Native Americans served integral roles in
6 World War II as "code talkers", employing their knowledge of Navajo and
7 other Native American languages, which languages the United States
8 government had long attempted to suppress through boarding schools
9 since the late 1800s, to develop unbreakable codes to send messages
10 across the Pacific; and

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

15 WHEREAS, 42,000 Native Americans served in the Vietnam War,
16 over 90 percent of them volunteers, and the names of 232 Native
17 Americans and Alaska Natives who were killed in combat or went
18 missing in action are etched on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in
19 Washington, DC; and

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

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

25 WHEREAS, Multiple generations of Colorado indigenous peoples
26 gave their lives in service to their country, including the Baker and Box
27 families of the Southern Ute Tribe; and

28 WHEREAS, The Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Tribes serve
29 an integral leadership role in the United Veterans Coalition of Colorado;
30 and

31 WHEREAS, Roughly 31,000 Native Americans and Alaska
32 Natives are currently on active duty, serving in Afghanistan, Iraq, and
33 around the world, in which they continue to serve in greater numbers per
34 capita than any other demographic group; and

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

3 WHEREAS, Native American veterans experience higher rates of
4 homelessness and substance abuse than other groups, and face limited
5 access to medical care due to the shortcomings of the Department of
6 Veteran Affairs in administering culturally sensitive treatment and
7 establishing facilities within accessible distances to rural reservations;
8 now, therefore,

9 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the*
10 *Seventy-fourth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate*
11 *concurring herein:*

12 (1) That we, the members of the General Assembly, honor the
13 disproportionately high military service, sacrifice, and patriotism of
14 Native American veterans;

15 (2) That we recognize the indispensable contributions of Native
16 Americans in advancing United States interests, military successes, and
17 global stability, often as the United States government failed to fulfill its
18 federal trust responsibility and protect Tribal treaty rights, lands, and
19 resources; and

20 (3) That we commit to addressing the unique hardships and
21 inequities faced by Native American veterans, service members, and Gold
22 Star families as well as upholding our nation's solemn responsibilities to
23 support the indigenous communities and Tribes that continue to serve our
24 country as those have since our nation's founding.