

**First Regular Session
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STATE OF COLORADO**

INTRODUCED

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HJR25-1020

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 25-1020

101 **CONCERNING RECOGNITION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN VETERANS.**

1 WHEREAS, The military history of African Americans spans from
2 the arrival of the first enslaved Africans during the colonial history of the
3 United States to the present day; and

4 WHEREAS, Throughout the history of the United States, African
5 Americans have honorably served in every military conflict fought by the
6 nation, often facing segregation, discrimination, and limited opportunities
7 while courageously defending our nation; and

8 WHEREAS, African Americans, despite being confined by the
9 segregation prevalent in our country, still chose the path of military
10 service to prove their worth as people and citizens; and

11 WHEREAS, Through their dedication and valor, African

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 American service members demonstrated their unwavering commitment
2 to the ideals of democracy and equality, even when those ideals were not
3 extended to them, and they ultimately helped to lay the groundwork for
4 the broader civil rights movement; and

5 WHEREAS, Even though many African American men and
6 women have tragically lost their lives in service to their country, these
7 and countless other African Americans chose the path of military service
8 to prove their worth, regain a sense of dignity, and secure a place of honor
9 within a society that often denied them fundamental rights. Through their
10 bravery, resilience, and determination, these individuals not only served
11 in defense of our nation but also fought for their right to stand as equals
12 alongside their fellow service members; and

13 WHEREAS, The military has long served as a unique arena in
14 which African American men and women could rise through the ranks,
15 challenging societal limitations and breaking barriers that confined them
16 to second-class status; and

17 WHEREAS, Despite facing segregation, discrimination, and
18 unequal treatment both within and outside of military service, African
19 American veterans persevered, demonstrating excellence, leadership, and
20 a deep commitment to duty, thus paving the way for future generations of
21 African American service members to continue the fight for equality,
22 justice, and respect within the armed forces and throughout American
23 society; and

24 WHEREAS, African American veterans have played pivotal roles
25 in every war fought by the United States, including the Revolutionary
26 War, the War of 1812, the Mexican American War, the Civil War, the
27 Indian Wars, the Spanish American War, both World Wars, the Korean
28 War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, and conflicts in Iraq and
29 Afghanistan, demonstrating exceptional bravery and dedication; and

30 WHEREAS, During the Civil War, approximately 180,000 African
31 American soldiers served in the Union Army, making up nearly 10
32 percent of its total force, and an additional 19,000 served in the Navy; and

33 WHEREAS, During World War I, more than 380,000 African
34 Americans served in the United States military, many of whom faced
35 segregation and discrimination while making invaluable contributions to
36 the war effort; and

1 WHEREAS, During World War II, more than 1.25 million African
2 Americans served in the United States military, including in combat and
3 support roles, while also breaking barriers that paved the way for the
4 desegregation of the armed forces; and

5 WHEREAS, Despite the dedication and sacrifice of African
6 American service members, many military authorities have historically
7 been skeptical of their patriotism, questioning their loyalty and
8 commitment to the nation they bravely served. This skepticism persisted
9 from the time before the end of slavery through Reconstruction and well
10 into the twentieth century. Even as African Americans fought valiantly in
11 wars such as the Civil War, World War I, and World War II, they were
12 often relegated to segregated units, given less prestigious assignments, or
13 denied the recognition they deserved; and

14 WHEREAS, This unjust treatment continued until the landmark
15 military desegregation policies of 1948, when President Harry S. Truman
16 issued Executive Order 9981, which sought to end segregation within the
17 armed forces. However, even after this official policy change, African
18 American veterans continued to face barriers to full equality in the
19 military, struggling against systemic racism, discrimination, and unequal
20 opportunities for advancement, despite their proven dedication to
21 defending the very freedoms that often eluded them in civilian life; and

22 WHEREAS, The implementation of Executive Order 9981 marked
23 a turning point in United States military history, leading to the gradual
24 integration of African Americans into all branches of the armed forces
25 and paving the way for broader civil rights advancements in American
26 society. However, despite this order, desegregation of the military was not
27 fully realized for several years, and all-African-American units persisted
28 well into the Korean War, with the last all-African-American unit not
29 being disbanded until 1954; and

30 WHEREAS, Despite their unwavering service, African American
31 veterans have historically been denied equal rights and benefits, including
32 access to the GI Bill, housing assistance, and other veteran services,
33 highlighting the need for continued advocacy and justice; and

34 WHEREAS, While African American service members continue
35 to demonstrate vigilance and resilience in all aspects of military service,
36 there remains much work to be done in the pursuit of equality,
37 opportunity, and recognition. African American men and women have led

1 the charge in advocating for a more inclusive military, clearing a path for
2 future generations to serve with dignity and pride. Their tireless efforts
3 have not only secured a place for them within the military but have also
4 opened doors for other African Americans to excel in leadership roles,
5 advancing both military service and broader societal progress; and

6 WHEREAS, The African American community takes great pride
7 in the enduring legacies left by those who have served, and they continue
8 to build upon the foundation of excellence, determination, and courage
9 laid by those who came before, ensuring that their contributions are
10 remembered and that their history serves as an inspiration for the next
11 generation of service members and leaders; and

12 WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Airmen, the first group of African
13 American military pilots in the United States armed forces during World
14 War II; the Buffalo Soldiers; the Montford Point Marines; and countless
15 other African American military units and individuals have left an
16 indelible mark on United States history, inspiring future generations and
17 reshaping the armed forces; and

18 WHEREAS, The late Lieutenant Colonel Clarence Shivers and
19 Colonel James Harvey III stand as towering figures in African American
20 military history, particularly in the context of the Tuskegee Airmen.
21 Lieutenant Colonel Shivers, a distinguished member of the Tuskegee
22 Airmen, served with bravery and distinction during World War II in the
23 332nd Fighter Group, which was known for its distinctive red-tailed
24 aircraft and played a significant role in escorting bombers during missions
25 over Europe. His legacy is immortalized with a statue dedicated to him at
26 the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, symbolizing
27 his remarkable contributions to the United States Air Force and the
28 struggle for equality in military service. Shivers retired in 1969, having
29 proven himself an integral part of the Tuskegee Airmen, a group of
30 pioneering African American pilots who shattered racial barriers in
31 aviation; and

32 WHEREAS, Colonel James Harvey III made his mark as one of
33 the first African American officers in the United States Air Force.
34 Harvey's leadership and service during and after World War II continue
35 to inspire future generations of airmen. As a member of the Tuskegee
36 Airmen, he helped pave the way for the eventual integration of the United
37 States Air Force and contributed to the desegregation of the military. Both
38 men's careers exemplify the courage, resilience, and professionalism of

1 African American service members in the face of adversity, making them
2 iconic figures in the history of Colorado military service; and

3 WHEREAS, Cathay Williams made history in 1866 as the first
4 African American woman to serve in the United States military. She
5 joined the 38th United States Infantry Regiment, which was stationed in
6 the western frontier during the post-Civil War era. She was honorably
7 discharged and passed away in Colorado, and her memorial is in Pueblo;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Wanda James, a distinguished veteran of the United
10 States Navy, made history as the first African American woman to be a
11 part of the Naval ROTC program at the University of Colorado Boulder.
12 Her groundbreaking service in the Navy paved the way for future
13 generations of African American women to pursue military careers. In her
14 continued commitment to public service and higher education, James
15 currently serves as a member of the University of Colorado Board of
16 Regents, where she has made a profound and lasting impact on the lives
17 of students, advocating for inclusive policies and supporting initiatives
18 that foster academic excellence, diversity, and leadership development
19 within the university community; and

20 WHEREAS, Leslie Summey is a United States Navy veteran. She
21 is the first African American person to ever be elected as a Commissioner
22 on the Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners and was sworn
23 into office January 9, 2023. Her current term expires January 2027. She
24 serves as the first African American chair of the Arapahoe County Board
25 of County Commissioners; and

26 WHEREAS, The 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion,
27 known as the "Six Triple Eight", was an all-African American, all-female
28 unit during World War II, playing a critical role in maintaining morale
29 and communication between United States soldiers stationed overseas and
30 their families back home. This battalion, which served in Europe, was
31 tasked with sorting and delivering delayed mail to troops, facing
32 tremendous challenges due to the sheer volume of undelivered packages.
33 The women of the 6888th, led by Lieutenant Colonel Charity Adams
34 Earley, displayed incredible determination and dedication, working
35 around the clock to ensure that soldiers received their letters and supplies;
36 and

37 WHEREAS, The 6888th's contributions were overlooked for many

1 years, but their service was integral to the success of wartime efforts and
2 a milestone in the integration of women into the military. The 6888th is
3 now recognized as one of the most important units in African American
4 and women's military history; and

5 WHEREAS, John W. Mosley Jr. persevered through adversity
6 throughout his life, inspired by his father, John W. Mosley Sr. Mosley Sr.,
7 born into slavery, migrated west to Colorado in the 1880s, during the
8 silver boom, seeking opportunity. In an era of Jim Crow laws, Mosley Sr.
9 secured employment as a Pullman porter, one of the few jobs available to
10 African American workers at the time; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1939, John W. Mosley Jr. enrolled at the
12 Agricultural College of Colorado (now Colorado State University),
13 becoming the first African American letterman in the school's history.
14 Many refer to him as the Jackie Robinson of CSU athletics. In 1998,
15 Mosley Jr. was inducted into the CSU Sports Hall of Fame, and in 2009,
16 he was admitted into the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame; and

17 WHEREAS, After college, Mosley Jr. joined the Tuskegee Airmen
18 and trained as a bomber pilot, one of the first African Americans to do so.
19 Lieutenant Colonel Mosley served for over 25 years on active and reserve
20 duty, including during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam
21 War. He participated in the Berlin Airlift, achieved the rank of command
22 pilot, and served as both a trainer and mentor to young pilots. Mosley Jr.
23 often remarked, "I had to fight in order to fight!"; and

24 WHEREAS, In 2015, Aurora Public Schools dedicated a P-8
25 school to Mosley Jr. and his wife, Edna. The school, Edna and John W.
26 Mosley P-8, opened on October 1, 2015, near Airport Boulevard and
27 Second Avenue in Aurora, Colorado, and currently serves over 900
28 students; and

29 WHEREAS, In 2021, Congress proposed a bill to dedicate the
30 newly built VA community-based outpatient clinic in Aurora, Colorado,
31 to Lieutenant Colonel Mosley. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on
32 January 27, 2025, and the clinic opened its doors to veterans on February
33 3, joining the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System, which serves
34 over 100,000 veterans annually; and

35 WHEREAS, The contributions of African American veterans
36 extend beyond the battlefield, as they have continued to serve their

1 communities as leaders, activists, educators, and public servants; and

2 WHEREAS, Recognizing the sacrifices and achievements of
3 African American veterans is essential to ensuring their legacy is honored
4 and their stories are preserved for future generations; and

5 WHEREAS, We formally acknowledge and honor the
6 extraordinary service and sacrifices of African American veterans
7 throughout United States history; now, therefore,

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

10 That we, the General Assembly, in recognition of the heroic efforts
11 and significant sacrifices of African American veterans:

12 (1) Support efforts to ensure African American veterans receive
13 equitable access to benefits, health care, and resources that they have
14 rightfully earned through their service;

15 (2) Encourage educational initiatives, museums, and historical
16 institutions to highlight the contributions of African American veterans,
17 ensuring their stories are shared and celebrated;

18 (3) During Black History Month and beyond, commit to
19 recognizing African American veterans' valor, perseverance, and
20 patriotism, affirming our dedication to justice, equality, and the honor of
21 their sacrifices; and

22 (4) Encourage the commemoration of African American veterans
23 throughout both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

24 *Be It Further Resolved,* That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent
25 to the Congressional Black Caucus; the National Black Caucus of State
26 Legislators; the Retired Enlisted Association; the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.;
27 the Colorado Black Women for Political Action; State Commander Carol
28 Thomas, Department of Colorado Veterans of Foreign Wars; American
29 Legion Department of Colorado; the United Veterans Coalition of
30 Colorado; the Colorado Disabled American Veterans; the Mountain
31 States Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America; Colonel James H.
32 Harvey III; Mrs. Peggy Chivers, the wife of the late Lieutenant Colonel
33 Clarence Chivers; and Aaron Futrell, grandson of John W. Mosley Jr.