

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 15

Relating to the designation of March as women veterans' month.

Whereas, each year Americans pause during the month of March to pay special tribute to the contributions that women have made to our national life, and outstanding among the myriad roles that women have assumed over the course of this country's history have been those undertaken as part of the nation's armed forces; and

Whereas, long before they gained regular admission to the military, thousands of women assisted the uniformed branches in a variety of ways; they worked as nurses, water bearers, laundresses, and cooks, sometimes served as spies and saboteurs, and on occasion even took up arms; and

Whereas, in 1901, the United States Army broke new ground by creating an actual nurses corps, and the navy followed in 1908; the ranks of these units swelled during World War I, when nearly 23,000 women served as nurses within the American military; the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps enlisted nearly 13,000 additional women as yeomen and reservists and assigned them to duty stateside, to free their male counterparts for combat at sea and abroad; and

Whereas, the participation of women in the military surged during World War II, with more than 400,000 filling posts at home and overseas; to more fully utilize their abilities, the army established the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, later known as the Women's Army Corps; the army also created the WASP (Women Airforce Service Pilots), while the navy organized the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service), the Marine Corps established the Marine Corps Women's Reserve, and the Coast Guard created a reserve unit known as the SPARs; in spite of widespread misgivings about their suitability for the work, women proved themselves in a wide array of assignments, and in 1948 an Act of Congress granted them permanent status in the regular and reserve forces; and

Whereas, barriers to the participation of women in the military continued to fall; legal provisions placing a two percent cap on the number of women serving and a ceiling on the highest grade a woman could achieve were repealed in 1967; by 1972, the various Reserve Officers' Training Corps programs were opened to women, and in 1976 women were admitted to the service academies; they are now eligible to enter more than 90 percent of all career fields in the armed forces; and

Whereas, women have continued to deploy in times of conflict: some 1,000 served in theater during the Korean War and 7,500 during the Vietnam War; hundreds saw duty in operations in Central America in the 1980s, and in 1991, 41,000 women served in theater in Operation Desert Storm; and

Whereas, today, approximately 344,500 women are serving in the United States military; they constitute about 14 percent of active duty personnel and about 10 percent of the American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

Whereas, the operations focused on those two countries have placed enormous demands on all who have taken part; like their male compatriots, many women have served multiple tours, and large numbers have been injured, many grievously; as of mid-January 2011, 136 women had given their lives in those two wars; and

Whereas, the increased involvement of women in the military is reflected by the number of women veterans, which now totals 1.8 million; Missouri is home to more than 45,340 women veterans; and

Whereas, Missourians have always honored the selflessness and sacrifice of those who perform military service, and these women are indeed worthy of that recognition; it is also fitting that needs they have incurred in connection with that service be acknowledged and alleviated, whether they concern physical or psychological wounds or the challenges of caring for their families or reintegrating into civilian life; and

Whereas, the women who have served in the United States armed forces have demonstrated tenacity, courage, and professionalism, and they are deserving of their fellow citizens' deepest gratitude and unfailing support:

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the members of the Missouri Senate, Ninety-eighth General Assembly, First Regular Session, the House of Representatives concurring therein, hereby designate the month of March each year from 2015 through 2025 as Women Veterans' Month in tribute to the immeasurable contributions that women in the military have made to this nation; and

Be It Further Resolved that the General Assembly encourages and urges all citizens of this state to reflect upon the service and sacrifices of women veterans; and

Be It Further Resolved that the Secretary of the Senate be instructed to send properly inscribed copies of this resolution to the Governor for his approval or rejection pursuant to the Missouri Constitution.

Resolution

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