

As a historically black college and university, or HBCU, Virginia State University is one of a diverse community of institutions. Historically black colleges and universities include 2- and 4-year institutions, public and private institutions, as well as single-sex and coed institutions. To be designated a historically black college or university, an institution must have been established prior to 1964 with a primary mission of educating African Americans.

Mr. Speaker, HBCUs have a long, proud and well-established heritage. These institutions have been educating the students of this Nation for over 100 years. While comprising fewer than 3 percent of the country's 2-and 4-year institutions, HBCUs are responsible for producing a significant number of all bachelor's, master's and professional degrees earned by African Americans.

Congress has repeatedly recognized the importance of the historically black colleges and universities. Between 1995 and 2006, congressional funding for the Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities Program rose from \$109 million to \$238 million, a 118 percent increase. What is more, funding for the HBCU Grad Program increased from \$19.6 million to \$57.9 million, an increase of 195 percent.

Virginia State University, located in Petersburg, VA, was originally founded on March 6, 1882, as the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute and was the first fully State-supported 4-year institution of higher education for African Americans and one of Virginia's two land-grant institutions. VSU's first president, John Mercer Langston, went on to become the first African American Member of Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

This school offers 43 undergraduate degree programs and 15 graduate degree programs. The campus is composed of more than 50 buildings, which include a 416-acre agricultural research facility. Since its founding, VSU has grown from a small HBCU to an institution that enrolls just over 5,000 students, 96 percent of whom are African American.

Mr. Speaker, it is for all of these reasons and more that I urge my colleagues to honor the 125th anniversary of Virginia State University and support H. Res. 182.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield as much time as he needs to my colleague from Virginia (Mr. FORBES).

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member McKEON for their work in getting this resolution to the floor. I also want to thank my friend and colleague, Congressman SCOTT, for his hard work and the work of his staff in getting the bill here and also Congresswoman FOXX for her efforts and her staff in helping to get H. Res. 182 on the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, as do my colleagues, to commend Virginia State University on the celebration of their

125th anniversary. This resolution honors Virginia State University's continued resolve to provide an excellence in education since March 6, 1882.

Mr. Speaker, today we just pause and we say to all of the current students of Virginia State University, to the alumni, to the faculty and to the administration, thank you for a job well done in the pursuit of excellence that you have done for these last 125 years.

As you may know and you have heard mentioned today, Mr. Speaker, Virginia State University is located in my district in Chesterfield County, and it is warmly embraced by the neighboring city of Petersburg. It was the first university to be fully funded by the Commonwealth of Virginia as an institution of higher learning for African Americans.

Currently, Virginia State University offers 45 baccalaureate and master's degree programs and introduced their first doctoral program in 2003. This campus includes 236 acres and an additional 416-acre agriculture research facility. They host nearly 5,000 students and continue to grow.

It fills me with pride to stand on the House floor today to present this resolution. We have had a long-standing relationship with Virginia State University and look forward to continuing this through the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution comes before the House floor cosponsored by the entire Virginia congressional delegation. Though I cannot speak for my colleagues, I believe I can say we are proud of the progress Virginia State University has provided through its 125 years of service to the students in Virginia and beyond. This anniversary represents a significant milestone in the Commonwealth of Virginia's history.

The university is more than worthy of this distinguished recognition for the impressive advancements and accomplishments in their 125-year history, and we are honored to acknowledge their achievements today.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, 125 years ago, Virginia State University was founded. I want to thank my colleague from Virginia for his leadership in introducing this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 182, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1500

AUTHORIZING USE OF ROTUNDA FOR CEREMONY TO AWARD CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR TO THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 15) authorizing the Rotunda of the Capitol to be used on March 29, 2007, for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Tuskegee Airmen.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. CON. RES. 15

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the Rotunda of the Capitol is authorized to be used on March 29, 2007, for a ceremony to award a Congressional Gold Medal collectively to the Tuskegee Airmen in accordance with Public Law 109-213. Physical preparations for the ceremony shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as the Architect of the Capitol may prescribe.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) and the gentleman from California (Mr. McCARTHY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of Senate Concurrent Resolution 15, which would authorize the use of the Capitol rotunda on March 29, 2007, to present a Congressional Gold Medal to members of the Tuskegee Airmen.

With the passage of the Civilian Pilot Training Act of 1939, Tuskegee University, along with various civil rights groups and the black press, began an effort to transform Federal Government policies and procedures that excluded African Americans from pilot training programs.

In this initial phase, Tuskegee Institute, which had a proven civilian pilot training program and had a history of producing graduates with the highest of flight aptitude exam scores, was awarded a contract by the U.S. Army Air Corps to help train America's first black military aviators.

Between 1940 and 1946, nearly 1,000 black pilots were trained at Tuskegee University. This undertaking produced the unrivaled Tuskegee Airmen, who are credited with not losing a single bomber to enemy fire in more than 200 combat missions as air escorts, a record unmatched by any other fighter group.

The Tuskegee Airmen destroyed some 260 enemy aircraft. These brave men accumulated a total of 850 medals for their service and valor. Tuskegee University continues its legacy of leadership in aeronautics.

Today, it is the first and only Historically Black College or University to offer a degree in aerospace science

engineering. Since 1983, it has produced the largest number of black aerospace engineers of any institution in America.

In spite of the adversity and limited opportunities, African Americans have played a significant role in the U.S. Navy and military history. The Tuskegee Airmen overcame segregation and prejudice to become one of the most highly respected fighter groups of World War II.

So on March 29, 2007, the President of the United States will present the Congressional Gold Medal to the survivors expected to attend the ceremony, after which the medal will be given to the Smithsonian Institution and will be displayed in the future as appropriate.

Last year, the House and Senate unanimously passed legislation brought to the floor by the Financial Services Committee to authorize the Congressional Gold Medal, which became Public Law 109-213. The bill had 310 cosponsors in the House and 77 in the Senate. Our colleague, the Honorable CHARLIE RANGEL of New York, has worked tirelessly as the lead House sponsor of this legislation, and he has been the catalyst to ensure that these men got their rightful spot in history.

Since the House Administration Committee has jurisdiction over matters relating to the Smithsonian Institution, I am especially pleased that language was able to be worked out in the bill which would allow the Smithsonian to accept this historic medal on behalf of the American people and to display it as appropriate, including a location associated with the Tuskegee Airmen.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. Con. Res. 15, which authorizes the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for the ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Tuskegee Airmen.

I would like to thank the distinguished chairman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for sponsoring the House version of this resolution. I would also like to thank my Chair of House Administration for her work as well.

All of our men and women of the armed services deserve our praise and recognition for the contributions they have made in defense of our country. It is notable that in the case of the Tuskegee Airmen they were fighting not one but two battles. As they bravely flew and maintained combat aircraft in World War II, these men also fought against the notion that somehow the color of their skin would affect their ability to courageously protect our Nation.

In 1941, the formation of the all African American squadron based in Tuskegee, Alabama, a group that would come to be known as the Tuskegee Airmen, was largely regarded

as an experiment of the U.S. military to test the combat readiness of the all-black fighting squadron. Sadly, there were some at the time who expected or perhaps even hoped that the experiment would fail. Instead, the Tuskegee Airmen became one of the most highly regarded units of the war, fighting bravely with distinction.

Among the honors bestowed upon them, they were awarded 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 744 Air Medals, 14 Bronze Stars, and 8 Purple Hearts. I proudly support authorization of the use of the Capitol rotunda where they will be recognized once more for their bravery and for blazing a trail, not only in the sky, but in the history as well.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from the great State of California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREEN).

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREEN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for the ceremony honoring the Tuskegee Airmen with the Congressional Gold Medal. I am pleased that S. Con. Res. 15 is currently under consideration.

As we all know, the Tuskegee Airmen were young men who enlisted to become America's first black military airmen at a time where, sadly in this country, there were many people who argued that black men lacked the necessary skills or ability to be part of an effective military force. Well, the Tuskegee Airmen effectively dispelled that notion that in any way African Americans were second-class citizens.

Mr. Speaker, although the term "hero" is perhaps overused in today's discourse, there is no better description of the Tuskegee Airmen. Not only were they the first black airmen to perform as they did, but they put their lives on the line for all Americans, regardless of color.

For that, we are all eternally grateful and eternally in their debt; and it is not only appropriate, but fitting, for us to take this step today. As one in his younger years who had an opportunity to meet some of these Tuskegee Airmen, I can tell you that they carried themselves with a great deal of pride in the contribution they had made to this Nation, and any conversations I had with such airmen, that is what they stressed, their contribution to this Nation.

So it is fitting that we take the time, as a thankful Nation, to give them this respect and honor them in this singular way with a Congressional Gold Medal and to have this done here at the center, at the heart of our democracy, the rotunda of the United States Capitol.

Mr. McCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. On March 29 of this year, this Nation will give to its Americans, rightfully, the Congressional Gold Medal that they deserve.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 78, which authorizes the use of the Capitol Rotunda for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Tuskegee Airmen. I strongly support the resolution because it is an appropriate and fitting tribute to one of the greatest groups of the Greatest Generation.

On July 19, 1941, the American Air Force created an all black flight training program at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The Tuskegee Airmen were not only unique in their military record, but they inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces, paving the way for integration of the Armed Services in the U.S.

The first class of cadets began in July of 1941 with 13 men, all of whom had college degrees, some with PhDs and all had pilot's licenses. From all accounts, the training of the Tuskegee Airmen was an experiment established to prove that "coloreds" were incapable of operating expensive and complex combat aircraft. Stationed in the segregated South, the black cadets were denied rifles.

The Tuskegee Airmen were credited with 261 aircraft destroyed, 148 aircraft damaged, 15,553 combat sorties and 1,578 missions over Italy and North Africa. They destroyed or damaged over 950 units of ground transportation and escorted more than 200 bombing missions. "We proved that the antidote to racism is excellence in performance," said retired LTC Herbert Carter, who started his military career as a pilot and maintenance officer with the Tuskegee Airmen's 99th Fighter Squadron. Clearly, the experiment, as it was called, was an unqualified success.

The Tuskegee Airmen were awarded 3 Presidential Unit Citations, 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses and Legions of Merit, along with The Red Star of Yugoslavia, 9 Purple Hearts, 14 Bronze Stars and more than 700 Air Medals and clusters. On February 28, 2006, the House passed H. Con. Res. 1259, authorizing the award of a Congressional Gold Medal on behalf of the Tuskegee Airmen. The President signed the legislation and it became Public Law 109-213 on April 11, 2006. The concurrent resolution before us authorizes the use of the Capitol Rotunda on March 29, 2007, for the award ceremony.

I would like to thank Congressman RANGEL for his tenacity in seeing to it that the contributions of Tuskegee Airmen are fully recognized and acknowledged by the people of the United States. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the resolution.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate concurrent resolution, S. Con. Res. 15.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate concurrent resolution was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks in the RECORD on Senate Concurrent Resolution 15.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE NEGRO BASEBALL LEAGUES AND THEIR PLAYERS

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 162) recognizing the contributions of the Negro Baseball Leagues and their players, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 162

Whereas even though African Americans were excluded from playing in the major leagues of their time with their white counterparts, the desire of many African Americans to play baseball could not be repressed;

Whereas Major League Baseball did not fully integrate its leagues until July 1959;

Whereas African Americans began organizing their own professional baseball teams in 1885;

Whereas the skills and abilities of Negro League players eventually made Major League Baseball realize the need to integrate the sport;

Whereas six separate baseball leagues, known collectively as the “Negro Baseball Leagues”, were organized by African Americans between 1920 and 1960;

Whereas the Negro Baseball Leagues included exceptionally talented players who played the game at its highest level;

Whereas on May 20, 1920, the Negro National League, the first successful Negro League, played its first game;

Whereas Andrew “Rube” Foster, on February 13, 1920, at the Paseo YMCA in Kansas City, Missouri, founded the Negro National League and also managed and played for the Chicago American Giants, and later was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas Leroy “Satchel” Paige, who began his long career in the Negro Leagues and did not make his Major League debut until the age of 42, is considered one of the greatest pitchers the game has ever seen, and during his long career thrilled millions of baseball fans with his skill and legendary showboating, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas Josh Gibson, who was the greatest slugger of the Negro Leagues, tragically died months before the integration of baseball, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas Jackie Robinson, whose career began with the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro American League, became the first African American to play in the Major Leagues in April 1947, was named Major League Baseball Rookie of the Year in 1947, subsequently led the Brooklyn Dodgers to 6 National League pennants and a World Series championship, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas Larry Doby, whose career began with the Newark Eagles of the Negro Na-

tional League, became the first African American to play in the American League in July 1947, was an All-Star 9 times in the Negro Leagues and Major League Baseball, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas John Jordan “Buck” O’Neil was a player and manager of the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro American League, became the first African American coach in the Major Leagues with the Chicago Cubs in 1962, served on the Veterans Committee of the National Baseball Hall of Fame, chaired the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum Board of Directors, and worked tirelessly to promote the history of the Negro Leagues;

Whereas the talents of such players as James Thomas “Cool Papa” Bell and Oscar Charleston earned them recognition in the Baseball Hall of Fame as well as the Sporting News List of Baseball’s Greatest Players, but were all denied admission to the Major Leagues due to the color of their skin;

Whereas Minnie Minoso played in the Negro Leagues for several years before being allowed to play in the Major League and was denied admission to the Hall of Fame, because during his prime years, he was a victim of racial discrimination;

Whereas Autozone Park in Memphis, Tennessee, has been designated to host on March 31, 2007, the inaugural Civil Rights Game between World Series champions, the St. Louis Cardinals and the Cleveland Indians in commemoration of the Civil Rights Movement; and

Whereas by achieving success on the baseball field, African American baseball players helped break down color barriers and integrate African Americans into all aspects of society in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the teams and players of the Negro Baseball Leagues for their achievements, dedication, sacrifices, and contributions to both baseball and our Nation; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation recognizing “Negro Leaguers Recognition Day”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, in 1872, Bud Fowler became the first African American to enter organized baseball. At the time, Sporting Life magazine called him “one of the best general players in the country. If he had had a white face,” they said, “he would be playing with the best of them.” There were only a handful of black players during that time.

By the end of the 1800s, the door to organized baseball was slammed shut to African Americans, and as a result, in 1920, Andrew “Rube” Foster managed a Negro baseball team and organized seven other team owners to join

him to form the Negro National Baseball League. Mr. Foster is known by many people to be the father of the Negro Baseball League.

For his efforts and contributions to baseball, he was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. Since 1920, many teams were formed to expand the Negro Baseball Leagues. He produced many extraordinary players like Satchel Paige, “Cool Papa” Bell, “Double-Duty” Radcliffe, “Groundhog” Thompson and many others.

Presently, there are 278 members of the National Baseball Hall of Fame, 18 whom had played in the Negro League. These greats include Willie Mays and Jackie Robinson, who first played in the Negro Leagues and then entered Major League Baseball.

Indeed, the players in the Negro Leagues were of such high caliber that many of them later moved to other major leagues and enjoyed better statistics playing there than they did in the Negro Leagues.

The opening of the doors of the major leagues to Negro League players often is attributed to Branch Rickey, who made a bold decision to sign Jackie Robinson to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. Unfortunately, many owners of Negro baseball teams could not compete in the recruitment and financial compensation for African American players, which later caused many African American teams to fold in the early 1960s.

Some people shake their heads and say that the Negro Leagues’ players came along too early. I think “Cool Papa” Bell had it right when he said “they opened the door, just too late.”

But then it is never too late to right what has been a wrong, to create equal opportunity and to open the doors for the Luke Easters, the Minnie Minosos, the Kirby Picketts, the Barry Bonds, the Frank Thomases, and countless others who have thrilled and delighted us with their skills.

The achievement and success of African American baseball players on the baseball field have helped break down color barriers and integrate African Americans into all aspects of society.

□ 1515

This bill recognizes the teams and the players of the Negro Baseball Leagues for their achievements, their sacrifices, their dedication, and their contributions to baseball and the Nation. I commend the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) for introducing the bill, and I urge its swift passage.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 162, which honors the Negro Baseball League.

Those of us who love baseball relish the comparisons between players of different eras that our rich statistical records permit. Nobody who witnessed