

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 63

Senators Brinks, McCann, Santana, Polehanki, Johnson, Geiss, Nesbitt, Wojno, Alexander, Stamas, Hollier, Chang, Bayer, Bullock and Bizon offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to recognize June 12, 2021, as Women Veterans
2 Recognition Day.

3 Whereas, Women have proudly served their country throughout
4 all periods of the history of the United States, whether disguised
5 as male soldiers during the American Revolution and Civil War, as
6 nurses in World War I, or as combat helicopter pilots in
7 Afghanistan; and

8 Whereas, Women have formally been a part of the United States
9 Armed Forces since the inception of the Army Nurse Corps in 1901,
10 but have informally served since the inception of our nation's

1 military; and

2 Whereas, During the American Revolution, women served on the
3 battlefield alongside the men, mainly as nurses, water bearers,
4 often called "Molly Pitchers," cooks, laundresses, and saboteurs.
5 Despite Army regulations that only men could enlist, women who
6 wanted to join in the fighting circumvented the rules by
7 masquerading as young men or boys; and

8 Whereas, In 1917, the Navy announced it would open enlistment
9 to women. About 12,000 female yeomen entered the Navy and filled a
10 variety of jobs including draftsmen, interpreters, couriers, and
11 translators; and

12 Whereas, During World War I, 307 women enlisted in the Marine
13 Corps. Like their sisters in the Navy, they were limited to the
14 enlisted ranks and worked mainly in Washington, D.C., doing various
15 administrative jobs. Women's service contributions in World War I
16 showed that they either had, or could quickly learn, nontraditional
17 skills needed by the military; and

18 Whereas, Following Pearl Harbor, Congress authorized new
19 components for women's services that increased the number of active
20 duty positions in the Army and Navy Nurse Corps. In May 1942, the
21 Army was given the authority to establish the Women's Army
22 Auxiliary Corps (WAAC). The Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps
23 followed suit, but rather than making women an auxiliary component,
24 they opted to enroll them in the reserves on the same basis as
25 their male counterparts, while the Army Air Forces enlisted nearly
26 1,100 female civilian volunteers who earned their silver wings as
27 Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP); and

28 Whereas, At the end of World War II in 1945, of the
29 approximately 12 million people remaining in the Armed Forces,

1 about 280,000 were women; and

2 Whereas, With the passage of the Women's Armed Services
3 Integration Act of 1948, women became a permanent part of the
4 United States military but continued to be restricted to two
5 percent of the military population. That restriction was finally
6 lifted in 1967 with an amendment to the Women's Armed Services
7 Integration Act, which also opened senior officer ranks to women;
8 and

9 Whereas, The early 1990s were a historic time in the military
10 with over 40,000 women deploying in support of the Persian Gulf
11 War, making women service members more visible in the eyes of the
12 public. In addition, the Defense Authorization Act of 1992 repealed
13 combat exclusion laws that had prevented women from flying combat
14 aircrafts; and

15 Whereas, Women who served in the United States military were
16 often referred to as the "invisible veterans" because their service
17 contributions, until the 1970s, went largely unrecognized by
18 politicians, the media, academia, and the general public; and

19 Whereas, Even though women have been officially serving in the
20 military since the creation of the Army Nurse Corps in 1901, they
21 have not always been considered qualified for veteran status for
22 the purpose of receiving benefits from the Department of Veterans
23 Affairs. Even after women were granted veteran status, issues of
24 access, exclusion, and improper management of their health care
25 remained; and

26 Whereas, It was not until well after World War II that women
27 who served in the military began to officially be recognized as
28 veterans; and

29 Whereas, In the late 1970s and early 1980s, many of the

1 contributions made by women in World War II were formally
2 recognized through laws granting these women official veteran
3 status for their service. This opened the doors for women to take
4 advantage of programs, opportunities, and benefits from the federal
5 and state governments, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and
6 other veteran service organizations; and

7 Whereas, Over the past 20 years, the Veteran Health
8 Administration (VHA) has introduced initiatives designed to improve
9 health care access and quality of care for women veterans; and

10 Whereas, In 2008, VHA's Women Veterans Health Strategic Health
11 Care Group began a five-year plan to redesign the nation's health
12 care delivery system for women. A fundamental component of this
13 plan is to ensure that all women veterans have access to
14 comprehensive primary care from skilled women's health providers;
15 and

16 Whereas, Originally, the 1980 decennial census marked the
17 first time that information on women veterans was ever captured in
18 a large national survey. At the time of the 1980 decennial census,
19 women made up just over two percent of the veteran population.
20 Today, that proportion has increased to almost eight percent; and

21 Whereas, There are currently over two million women veterans
22 living in the United States and Puerto Rico. Of this number, nearly
23 44,000 make Michigan their home; now, therefore, be it

24 Resolved by the Senate, That members of this legislative body
25 recognize June 12, 2021, as Women Veterans Recognition Day; and be
26 it further

27 Resolved, That we urge all Michiganders to honor women
28 veterans on this momentous occasion.