

HR-111, As Adopted by House, June 13, 2007

Reps. Lemmons, Young, Accavitti, Agema, Bauer, Bieda, Brandenburg, Brown, Cheeks, Clack, Constan, Coulouris, Cushingberry, Dean, Donigan, Espinoza, Farrah, Garfield, Gonzales, Green, Hammel, Hammon, Hildenbrand, Hopgood, Huizenga, Johnson, Rick Jones, Robert Jones, LaJoy, Kathleen Law, LeBlanc, Lindberg, Mayes, McDowell, Meadows, Meisner, Miller, Nitz, Palmer, Pastor, Pearce, Polidori, Proos, Rocca, Sak, Shaffer, Sheltroun, Alma Smith, Stahl, Tobocman, Vagnozzi, Valentine, Warren and Horn offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 111.

A resolution applauding the Tuskegee Airmen for the receipt of the Congressional Gold Medal and for their exemplary service to our state and the nation.

Whereas, On March 29, 2007, President George Bush presented the Congressional Gold Medal to the surviving Airmen; and

Whereas, As retired Lt. Col. Herbert Carter said, "We proved that the antidote to racism is excellence in performance"; and

Whereas, The first class of cadets began in July of 1941 with 13 men, all of whom had college degrees, some with PhD's and all had pilot's licenses. The Tuskegee Airmen were awarded three Presidential Unit Citations, 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses and Legions of Merit, along with the Red Star of Yugoslavia, nine Purple Hearts, 14 Bronze Stars and more than 700 Air Medals and Clusters; and

Whereas, On February 28, 2006, the U.S. House passed House Concurrent Resolution 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; and

Whereas, Four hundred and fifty African-American fighter pilots fought in aerial battles over North Africa, Sicily and Europe during World War II. Sixty-six of the pilots died in combat, while another 33 were shot down and captured as prisoners of war. 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. In addition, as an escort fighter wing they never lost a bomber to enemy fighters. German pilots feared and respected them. White American bomber crews referred to them as "Redtailed Angels" because of the bright red paint on the tail assemblies and because of their reputation for not losing bombers to enemy fighters; and

Whereas, Michigan shares a rich history with the Tuskegee Airmen. In addition to their training at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, in subsequent years some of the airmen trained at Selfridge Field and Oscoda Field. The late Coleman Young, former mayor of the city of Detroit, trained as a navigator bombardier for the 477th. In the early 1970s, the Airmen established their first chapter in Detroit. Today there are 42 chapters located in major cities of the U.S. The chapters support young people through scholarships, sponsorships to the military academies and flight training programs. Detroit is also the location of the Tuskegee Airmen National Museum. A total of 155 Tuskegee Airmen originated from Michigan; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body applaud the Tuskegee Airmen for the receipt of the Congressional Gold Medal and for their exemplary service to our state and the nation.