

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 65

Reps. Wilson, Brabec, Edwards, Neeley, O'Neal, Scott, Hood, McFall, Grant, Wegela, Tyrone Carter, McKinney, Young, Brenda Carter, Paiz, Andrews and Whitsett offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to declare March 23, 2023, as Tuskegee Airmen Day
2 in the state of Michigan.

3 Whereas, In 1925, the United States Army War College issued a
4 grossly inaccurate and disparaging official report intending to
5 relegate African-Americans to menial duty positions in the
6 military; and

7 Whereas, By the time the United States was drawn into World
8 War II (WWII), more African-Americans were receiving higher
9 education and aspiring for more meaningful jobs in the military,
10 including airplane pilots; and

11 Whereas, The rapid expansion of aircraft production to meet

1 the demand for air power during WWII created a need for military
2 pilots; and

3 Whereas, The public outcry from the African-American
4 population, media, and fair-minded people of all races resulted in
5 the United States Department of War extending the opportunity to
6 fly airplanes to all military members, regardless of race; and

7 Whereas, The War Department's Civilian Pilot Training
8 (CPT) Program authorized colleges and universities to train civilian
9 students to increase the number of civilian pilots, thereby
10 contributing to military preparedness; and

11 Whereas, The Tuskegee Institute in Alabama was one of six
12 African-American colleges and universities chosen to participate in
13 the CPT Program, and helped open the door for the first African
14 American military pilots; and

15 Whereas, During WWII, from January 1941-July 1949, both men
16 and women participated in the Tuskegee Experience in Tuskegee,
17 Alabama; and

18 Whereas, The Tuskegee Airmen flew more than 15,000 sorties,
19 destroyed over 1,000 German aircraft, received hundreds of Air
20 Medals, more than 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, and lost very
21 few bomber aircraft to enemy air action during escort missions; and

22 Whereas, The Tuskegee Airmen's outstanding performance record
23 was unprecedented in military aviation history and disproves every
24 adverse and prejudiced contention barring African Americans from
25 becoming pilots; and

26 Whereas, The Tuskegee Airmen overcame segregation and
27 prejudice to become one of the most prestigious, decorated, and
28 respected fighting groups of WWII; and

29 Whereas, The Tuskegee Airmen of the 332nd Fighter Group were

1 based at Selfridge Field in Mt. Clemens and Oscoda Army Air Field.
2 Fifteen Tuskegee Airmen pilots lost their lives on training
3 exercises in Michigan; and

4 Whereas, More than 52 service members from Michigan served as
5 Tuskegee Airmen during WWII; and

6 Whereas, From August 11-13, 1972, the Tuskegee Airmen
7 Organization was formed in the basement of the original Tuskegee
8 Airmen, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Jefferson in Detroit; and

9 Whereas, In the United States, there are 62 Tuskegee Airmen
10 chapters. On March 6, 1973, the Detroit chapter became the founding
11 incorporated chapter. In 2012, an additional chapter of the
12 Tuskegee Airmen was formed in West Bloomfield, Michigan to reach
13 youth in Detroit; and

14 Whereas, In Michigan, on August 6, 1986, the Tuskegee Airmen
15 National Historical Museum was incorporated; and

16 Whereas, March was the month the first cadets received their
17 silver wings, the first maintenance crew began training at Chanute
18 Field, Illinois, and the 99th Pursuit Squadron was activated. On
19 March 29, 2007, President George W. Bush also presented the
20 Tuskegee Airmen the Congressional Gold Medal; now, therefore, be it

21 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of
22 this legislative body declare March 23, 2023, as Tuskegee Airmen
23 Day in the state of Michigan. We encourage citizens to commemorate
24 the heroic men and women who served as Tuskegee Airmen.