



## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 26-1007

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Stewart K. and Suckla, Bacon, Barron, Boesenecker, Bottoms, Bradfield, Bradley, Brooks, Brown, Caldwell, Camacho, Carter, Clifford, DeGraaf, Duran, English, Espenoza, Feret, Flanell, Froelich, Garcia, Garcia Sander, Gilchrist, Goldstein, Gonzalez R., Hamrick, Hartsook, Jackson, Johnson, Joseph, Keltie, Lindsay, Lukens, Mabrey, Martinez, Mauro, Nguyen, Paschal, Phillips, Richardson, Ricks, Rutinel, Sirota, Slaugh, Smith, Soper, Stewart R., Story, Taggart, Titone, Valdez, Velasco, Willford, Winter T., Woodrow, Woog, Zokaie, McCluskie; also SENATOR(S) Gonzales J. and Simpson, Amabile, Baisley, Ball, Bright, Carson, Catlin, Cutter, Danielson, Exum, Frizell, Hinrichsen, Jodeh, Kipp, Kirkmeyer, Kolker, Lindstedt, Liston, Michaelson Jenet, Mullica, Pelton B., Pelton R., Rich, Roberts, Rodriguez, Snyder, Wallace, Weissman, Zamora Wilson, Coleman.

### CONCERNING HONORING AND RECOGNIZING THE MILITARY SERVICE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS AND COMMUNITIES.

WHEREAS, The contributions, sacrifices, and disproportionate service of Native American veterans has been integral to the success of the United States military over the course of its history; and

WHEREAS, The Colorado General Assembly recognizes that we are on the Indigenous land of the Arapahoe and Cheyenne, and the state of Colorado also encompasses the native lands of the Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, and Navajo, and that settling on the land came at great cost to the Native American people, including suppression of culture and being confined to reservations; and

WHEREAS, The Indigenous peoples of this land embody a warrior spirit. Tribal warrior traditions; treaty commitments with the United States; the opportunity to demonstrate patriotism; and pursuit of employment, education, or adventure, as well as a responsibility for defending Native American homelands, serve as a call to Indigenous military service; and

WHEREAS, Native American veterans have served with distinction in the United States military in every major conflict for over 200 years, earning Purple Hearts, Bronze Stars, Silver Stars, Congressional Gold Medals, the Congressional Medal of Honor, and other medals, awards, and decorations; and

WHEREAS, During the Revolutionary War, the Penobscot Nation and Passamaquoddy Tribe heeded General George Washington's call on December 24, 1776, for supplemental troops for his army by sending 600 of their own to fight on behalf of the American Revolution; and

WHEREAS, During the American Civil War, roughly 3,600 Native Americans served in the Union Army; and

WHEREAS, More than 12,000 Native Americans served in World War I, many of whom were not conscripted but had volunteered to serve despite the fact that one-third of all Native Americans still had not been granted full citizenship by the United States government at the time; and

WHEREAS, Over one-third of able-bodied Native American men between the ages of 18 and 50, and as much as 70 percent of certain tribal populations, served during World War II, representing the highest per capita contribution to the total war effort of any demographic group in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The United States World War II mobilization efforts infringed on several Native American reservations; diminished the influence of the Bureau of Indian Affairs within Congress by moving its Washington, DC office to Chicago; cut funding for Native American programs; and caused a shortage of nurses and doctors on reservations as medical professionals joined military operations; and

WHEREAS, The Choctaw Indians, largely without American citizenship status, pioneered the use of Native American languages to encode United States military communications while stationed at battlefield command posts, successfully protecting United States and Allied troops, supply locations, and plans from enemy intelligence; ensuring the security of Allied resources and Allied lives; and contributing to the Allied victory in World War I; and

WHEREAS, Over 400 Native Americans served integral roles in World War II as "Code Talkers", employing their knowledge of Navajo and other Native American languages—which languages the United States government attempted to suppress in boarding schools where Native American youth were forbidden from, and even beaten for, speaking their languages—to develop unbreakable codes to send messages across the Pacific; and

WHEREAS, During World War II, more than 33 tribes were represented among those who contributed to the war effort as Code Talkers, including the Cherokee Nation, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Choctaw Nation, Comanche Nation, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Crow Nation, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe, Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes, Ho-Chunk Nation, Hopi Tribe, Kiowa Tribe, Menominee Nation, Meskwaki Nation, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Oglala Sioux Tribe, Oneida Nation, Osage Nation, Pawnee Nation, Ponca Tribe, Pueblo of Acoma Tribe, Pueblo of Laguna Tribe, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Santee Sioux Nation, Seminole Nation, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate (Sioux) Tribe, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Tlingit Tribe, Tonto Apache Tribe, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Yankton Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, and Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes; and

WHEREAS, Navajo Code Talkers contributed to every Pacific Marine-led assault from 1942 to 1945, including Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, and Peleliu, and in 2001, 28 Navajo Code Talkers received Congressional Gold Medals, mostly posthumously; and

WHEREAS, Two Native American men were involved in the famous raising of the flags over Iwo Jima: Louis Charles Charlo, from the Bitterroot Salish Tribe of Montana, helped raise the first flag flown over the island, and Ira Hayes Prima of Arizona helped raise the second, when the moment was famously immortalized on film; and

WHEREAS, 42,000 Native Americans served in the Vietnam War, over 90 percent of them volunteers, and the names of 232 Native Americans and Alaska Natives who were killed in combat or went missing in action are etched on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, DC; and

WHEREAS, Over 10,000 Native Americans served in the Korean War, and 194 were killed in combat; and

WHEREAS, There are about 60 Southern Ute veterans who served in the United States military, including during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Persian Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, Multiple generations of Colorado Indigenous peoples gave their lives in service to their country, including the Baker and Box families of the Southern Ute Tribe; and

WHEREAS, The Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Tribes serve an integral leadership role in the United Veterans Coalition of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, Roughly 31,000 Native Americans and Alaska Natives are currently on active duty, serving around the world, in which they continue to serve in greater numbers per capita than any other demographic group; and

WHEREAS, Native American women serve in our Armed Forces at disproportionately high rates; and

WHEREAS, Colorado made history in March of 2024 when Governor Jared Polis appointed Howard Richards, Sr. of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe to serve as the first Native veteran on the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, Native American veterans experience higher rates of homelessness and substance abuse than other groups and face limited access to medical care due to the shortcomings of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs in administering culturally sensitive treatment and establishing facilities within accessible distances to rural reservations; now, therefore,

*Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-fifth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein:*

- (1) That we, the members of the General Assembly, honor the disproportionately high military service, sacrifice, and patriotism of Native American veterans;
- (2) That we recognize the indispensable contributions of Native Americans in advancing United States interests, military successes, and global stability, often as the United States government failed to fulfill its federal trust responsibility and protect tribal treaty rights, lands, and resources; and

(3) That we commit to addressing the unique hardships and inequities faced by Native American veterans, service members, and Gold Star families, as well as upholding our nation's solemn responsibilities to support the Indigenous communities and tribes that continue to serve our country as they have since our nation's founding.

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Julie McCluskie  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES

James Rashad Coleman Sr.  
PRESIDENT OF  
THE SENATE

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Vanessa Reilly  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
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THE SENATE