



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 103

Resolution urging Congress to pass and the President to sign H.R.1726 and S.1174, to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as Borinqueneers.

By The Speaker (Council Member Mark-Viverito) and Council Members Arroyo, Barron, Chin, Constantinides, Dickens, Ferreras, Palma, Reynoso, Rose, Mendez, Miller, Van Bramer, Dromm and Ulrich

Whereas, Today, there are 4.9 million United States (“U.S.”) citizens who are of Puerto Rican descent, of which 761,720 reside in New York City, according to the latest data reported by the U.S. Census Bureau; and

Whereas, On March 2, 1889, Congress passed the Army Appropriation Bill, which authorized the first body of native troops in Puerto Rico; and

Whereas, Puerto Rico became a U.S. Territory after the signing of the 1898 Treaty of Paris which ended the Spanish-American War; and

Whereas, The “Porto Rico Provisional Regiment of Infantry” was organized in 1901; and

Whereas, In 1917, Puerto Ricans were granted U.S. citizenship, and in that same year, the Puerto Rican military unit officially became part of the U.S. Army; and

Whereas, During World War I, the infantry defended the Panama Canal and upon their return to Puerto Rico in 1919, was renamed the “65th Infantry Regiment”; and

Whereas, During World War I, Lieutenant Teófilo Marxuach fired the first shots of the war on behalf of the United States at the Odenwald, an armed German supply ship, which was returned by force to San Juan Bay whereupon its contraband was confiscated; and

Whereas, During World War II, the 65th Infantry gallantly served in North Africa and Europe, winning the Maples-Foggian, Rome-Arne, Central Europe and Rhineland battle campaigns; and

Whereas, After the war, the 65th Infantry were assigned dangerous security, anti-sabotage and other occupation missions in Germany, and was among the last units to return home; and

Whereas, In 1950, after arriving in Pusan, Korea, the 65th Infantry joined the United States 3rd Infantry and were amongst the first to meet the enemy in the battlefields of Korea; and

Whereas, Throughout the course of the Korean War, Puerto Rico suffered more casualties than a majority of the states in the U.S.; and

Whereas, A total of 61,000 Puerto Ricans served in the U.S. military during the Korean War, of which more than 700 men were killed and more than 100 are still missing in action; and

Whereas, During the Korean War, members of 65th Infantry Regiment informally called themselves “Borinqueneers,” a term derived from Puerto Rico’s indigenous Taino name, Borikén, meaning “land of the brave lord”; and

Whereas, The 65th Infantry is credited with the last battalion-sized bayonet assault in United States Army history; and

Whereas, The 65th Infantry was awarded nine Korean Battle Campaign Awards, the Presidential and Meritorious Unit Commendations, two Korean Presidential Unit Citations, the Greek Gold Medal, Navy Unit Commendation and many other awards for bravery; and

Whereas, On March 18, 2014, Master Sergeant Juan E. Negrón will receive the Medal of Honor, posthumously, for his courageous actions while serving as a member of Company L, 65th Infantry Regiment, 3d Infantry Division during combat operations against an armed enemy in Kalma-Eri, Korea on April 28, 1951; and

Whereas, Including the aforementioned award, individual members of the 65th Infantry Regiment would have earned one Medal of Honor, 10 Distinguished Service Crosses, 256 Silver Stars, 606 Bronze Stars, 2,771 Purple Hearts and many other individual awards over the span of World War I, World War II, and the Korean War; and

Whereas, The 65th Infantry Regiment has received other honors including a street co-naming in the Bronx, New York, called “La 65 de Infanteria Boulevard”; and

Whereas, Although the 65th Infantry has received many prestigious awards, it has never received a Congressional Gold Medal; and

Whereas, Other military units have received the Congressional Gold Medal including the Native American Marines, known as the Navajo Wind Talkers, World War II Japanese American intelligence soldiers, known as the Nisei Soldiers, and the first African American military aviators, known as the Tuskegee Airmen; and

Whereas, Given the contributions of these American citizens to the U.S. military, Borinqueneers deserve to be Congressional Gold Medal recipients among the other distinguished soldiers; and

Whereas, H.R.1726, sponsored by Congressman Bill Posey, and S.1174, sponsored by Senator Richard Blumenthal, would award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as Borinqueneers; and

Whereas, The 65th Infantry fought bravely as they loyally defended America against all enemies while facing discrimination, segregation and unusual obstacles; and

Whereas, It is imperative that Congress pass H.R.1726 and S.1174 to recognize and honor the 65th Infantry’s outstanding service; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York urges Congress to pass and the President to sign H.R.1726 and S.1174, to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as Borinqueneers.

TC
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