

2016 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 95

Commending the United States Colored Troops Descendants.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 29, 2016

WHEREAS, the United States Colored Troops Descendants honors African American veterans of the United States military who served in the Civil War; and

WHEREAS, the United States Colored Troops Descendants (USCTD) association is a division of the Bells Mill Historical Research and Restoration Society, a nonprofit educational, research, and archival organization based in Chesapeake; and

WHEREAS, the USCTD honors soldiers and sailors of color who played a vital role in American history, especially during the Civil War when more than 240,000 black military service members fought to preserve the Union and end slavery; and

WHEREAS, in 1863, the United States War Department established the Bureau of Colored Troops, enabling the country's military branches to recruit African Americans to fight for the Union; in May 2014, the USCTD formally recognized the formation of the bureau at a Founders Day observance in Chesapeake; and

WHEREAS, the USCTD commemorates the military service of newly freed slaves—especially those from the Hampton Roads area—who joined the Union cause; recently the organization laid a marker at the Unknown and Known Afro-Union Civil War Soldiers Memorial in Chesapeake; and

WHEREAS, the marker was placed by the USCTD in memory of Littleton Owens, a commissary sergeant from Princess Anne County who served in Company C of the 2nd U.S. Colored Troops Cavalry during the Civil War; and

WHEREAS, according to some accounts, by the end of the Civil War, there were more African American soldiers from the Chesapeake area fighting for the Union than there were local soldiers fighting for the Confederate cause; and

WHEREAS, the USCTD and the Bells Mill Historical Research and Restoration Society aim to educate the public about the courageous service of African American troops who volunteered to fight to save the nation and defeat slavery; the soldiers and sailors valiantly combatted a system that had enslaved millions of people and also worked to reunite the country; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the United States Colored Troops Descendants hereby be commended for educating the public about the many sacrifices made by freed slaves who took up arms to fight to preserve the Union and defeat slavery; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to E. Curtis Alexander, officer-in-charge of the United States Colored Troops Descendants, as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect and admiration for the tireless efforts of the association to keep a vital part of the Commonwealth's past alive.

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