

## 2019 SESSION

INTRODUCED

19104026D

### HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 732

Offered January 21, 2019

*Designating the fourth Thursday in March, in 2019 and in each succeeding year, as Tuskegee Airmen Commemoration Day in Virginia.*

Patrons—Aird and Price

Unanimous consent to introduce

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, prior to World War II, African Americans had very limited roles in the defense of the nation with no involvement in military aviation; and

WHEREAS, the United States War Department used a grossly inaccurate and disparaging report published in 1925 with the intent of relegating African Americans to menial duty positions; and

WHEREAS, more African Americans were receiving higher education by the time the United States was drawn into World War II and were thus aspiring to more meaningful jobs in the military, including aviation; and

WHEREAS, the rapid expansion of aircraft production to meet air power demands during World War II created a greater need for military pilots; and

WHEREAS, the public outcry from the African American population and media, as well as fair-minded white Americans, exhorted the War Department to extend the opportunity to fly airplanes to include African American United States Army Air Corps service personnel; and

WHEREAS, the War Department's Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP) authorized colleges and universities to train civilian students to increase the number of civilian pilots, thus having a clear impact on military preparedness; and

WHEREAS, Tuskegee Institute in Alabama was one of six black schools chosen to participate in the CPTP Program and helped open the doors for the first African American military pilots, who became known as the Tuskegee Airmen; and

WHEREAS, the Tuskegee Airmen included pilots, navigators, bombardiers, maintenance crews, instructors, and other support officer, enlisted, and civilian personnel whose outstanding performance record was unprecedented in military aviation history, thus disproving every adverse, prejudiced contention made prior to World War II; and

WHEREAS, the month of March is special for the Tuskegee Airmen as the month the first aviation cadets started their flight training, the first maintenance crew began training at Chanute Field in Illinois, and the 99th Pursuit Squadron, the first all-African American squadron, was established; and

WHEREAS, on March 29, 2007, the fourth Thursday of March that year, President George W. Bush presented the Tuskegee Airmen with the Congressional Gold Medal; and

WHEREAS, at one time, 38 pilots and more than 400 ground support crew members had direct ties to Virginia, and at least six Tuskegee Airmen continue to reside in Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate the fourth Thursday in March, in 2019 and in each succeeding year, as Tuskegee Airmen Commemoration Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit copies of this resolution to the East Coast, Howard Baugh, and Tidewater Chapters of Tuskegee Airmen, Incorporated, so that members of the organization may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.

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