

SENATE RESOLUTION NO.55

Senator MacGregor, Alexander, Barrett, Bayer, Bizon, Brinks, Bullock, Geiss, Hollier, Irwin, Johnson, LaSata, Lucido, McCann, McMorrow, Polehanki, Santana, Theis, VanderWall and Wojno offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to recognize June 12, 2019, as Women Veterans
2 Recognition Day.

3 Whereas, Women have proudly served their country throughout
4 all periods of the history of the United States, whether disguised
5 as male soldiers during the American Revolution and Civil War, as
6 nurses in World War I, or as combat helicopter pilots in
7 Afghanistan; and

8 Whereas, Women have formally been a part of the United States
9 Armed Forces since the inception of the Army Nurse Corps in 1901,

1 but have informally served since the inception of our nation's
2 military; and

3 Whereas, During the American Revolution, women served on the
4 battlefield alongside the men, mainly as nurses, water bearers,
5 often called "Molly Pitchers," cooks, laundresses, and saboteurs.
6 Despite Army regulations that only men could enlist, women who
7 wanted to join in the fighting circumvented the rules by
8 masquerading as young men or boys; and

9 Whereas, In 1917, the Navy announced it would open enlistment
10 to women. About 12,000 female yeomen entered the Navy and filled a
11 variety of jobs, including draftsmen, interpreters, couriers, and
12 translators; and

13 Whereas, During World War I, 307 women enlisted in the Marine
14 Corps. Like their sisters in the Navy, they were limited to the
15 enlisted ranks and worked mainly in Washington, D.C., doing various
16 administrative jobs. Women's service contributions in World War I
17 showed that they either had, or could quickly learn, nontraditional
18 skills needed by the military; and

19 Whereas, Following Pearl Harbor, Congress authorized new
20 components for women's services that increased the number of active
21 duty positions in the Army and Navy Nurse Corps. In May 1942, the
22 Army was given the authority to establish the Women's Army
23 Auxiliary Corps, also known as the WAACs. The Navy, Coast Guard,
24 and Marine Corps followed suit, but rather than making women an
25 auxiliary component, they opted to enroll them in the reserves on
26 the same basis as their male counterparts, while the Army Air
27 Forces enlisted nearly 1,100 female civilian volunteers who earned
28 their silver wings as Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP); and

29 Whereas, At the end of World War II in 1945, of the

1 approximately 12 million people remaining in the Armed Forces,
2 about 280,000 were women; and

3 Whereas, With the passage of the Women's Armed Services
4 Integration Act of 1948, women became a permanent part of the
5 United States military, but women continued to be restricted to two
6 percent of the military population. That restriction was finally
7 lifted in 1967 with the amendment of the Women's Armed Services
8 Integration Act, which also opened senior officer ranks to women;
9 and

10 Whereas, The early 1990s were a historic time for women in the
11 military with over 40,000 women deploying in support of the Persian
12 Gulf War, making women service members more visible in the eyes of
13 the public. In addition, the Defense Authorization Act in 1992
14 repealed combat exclusion laws that had prevented women from flying
15 combat aircrafts; and

16 Whereas, Women who have served in the United States military
17 are often referred to as "invisible veterans" because their service
18 contributions, until the 1970s, went largely unrecognized by
19 politicians, the media, academia, and the general public; and

20 Whereas, Even though women have been officially serving in the
21 military since the creation of the Army Nurse Corps in 1901, they
22 have not always been considered qualified for veteran status for
23 the purpose of receiving benefits from the Department of Veterans
24 Affairs. Even after women were granted veteran status, issues of
25 access, exclusion, and improper management of their health care
26 still remained; and

27 Whereas, It was not until well after World War II that women
28 who served in the military began to officially be recognized as
29 veterans; and

1 Whereas, In the late 1970s and early 1980s, many of the
2 contributions made by women in World War II were formally
3 recognized through laws that granted these women with veteran
4 status for their time in service. This opened the doors for women
5 to take advantage of programs, opportunities, and benefits from the
6 federal and state governments, the Department of Veterans Affairs,
7 and other veteran service organizations; and

8 Whereas, Over the past 20 years, the Veterans Health
9 Administration (VHA) has introduced initiatives designed to improve
10 health care access and quality of care for women veterans; and

11 Whereas, In 2008, VHA's Women Veterans Health Strategic Health
12 Care Group began a five-year plan to redesign the nation's health
13 care delivery system for women. A fundamental component of this
14 plan was to ensure that all women veterans had access to
15 comprehensive primary care from skilled women's health providers;
16 and

17 Whereas, The 1980 decennial census marked the first time that
18 information on women veterans was ever captured in a large national
19 survey. At the time of the 1980 decennial census, women made up
20 just over two percent of the veteran population. Today, that
21 proportion has increased to almost eight percent; and

22 Whereas, There are currently over two million women veterans
23 living in the United States and Puerto Rico. Of this number, nearly
24 44,000 make Michigan their home; now, therefore, be it

25 Resolved by the Senate, That members of this legislative body
26 recognize June 12, 2019, as Women Veterans Recognition Day; and be
27 it further

28 Resolved, That we urge all Michiganders to honor women
29 veterans on this momentous occasion.