

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 55

Senator MacGregor 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,
10 but have informally served since the inception of our nation's
11 military; and

12 Whereas, During the American Revolution, women served on the

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

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

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

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

26 Whereas, At the end of World War II in 1945, of the
27 approximately 12 million people remaining in the Armed Forces,
28 about 280,000 were women; and

29 Whereas, With the passage of the Women's Armed Services

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

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

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

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

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

27 Whereas, In the late 1970s and early 1980s, many of the
28 contributions made by women in World War II were formally
29 recognized through laws that granted these women with veteran

1 status for their time in service. This opened the doors for women
2 to take advantage of programs, opportunities, and benefits from the
3 federal and state governments, the Department of Veterans Affairs,
4 and other veteran service organizations; and

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

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

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

19 Whereas, There are currently over two million women veterans
20 living in the United States and Puerto Rico. Of this number, nearly
21 44,000 make Michigan their home; now, therefore, be it

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

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