

Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HJ-6

RESOLUTION HONORING THE MEMBERS OF THE 6888TH CENTRAL

Title: POSTAL DIRECTORY BATTALION.

Vote Date: 2/18/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 1/30/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Andre F. Baker, 124th Dist.
Rep. Dominique Johnson, 143rd Dist.
Rep. Trenee McGee, 116th Dist.
Rep. Hubert D. Delany, 144th Dist.
Rep. Kurt Vail, 52nd Dist.
Rep. Anthony L. Nolan, 39th Dist.
Rep. Mark W. Anderson, 62nd Dist.
Rep. Mark DeCaprio, 48th Dist.
Rep. Michael DiGiovancarlo, 74th Dist.
Sen. Paul Cicarella, 34th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This resolution seeks to honor the service and commitment of the 6888th Battalion, the only battalion in World War II that consisted primarily of African American and Latina women. During World War II, the battalion worked through inhumane working conditions and constant threat of violence to deliver mail to and bolster the morale of US soldiers in France. The battalion was disbanded in 1946 with no parade or formal recognition, hence the need to posthumously honor their importance to the war effort.

The original language of the resolution stated that the battalion was composed exclusively of African American and Latina women; as the unit contained several Caribbean women and other women of color, the substitute language changes “exclusively” to “predominantly”.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Lt. Governor, Susan Bysiewicz: Lt. Governor Bysiewicz explained some of the history behind the 688th battalion, pointing out that they worked grueling hours twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, in order to deliver mail to the front lines. In spite of their massive contribution to the war though, they were never recognized for their contributions to World War II and the US Military. She urged the committee to recognize and honor the dedication of these women.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Representative Andre Baker, Majority Whip at Large, Connecticut General Assembly: Rep. Baker expressed his support for the resolution and went into the history of the battalion, detailing the inhumane conditions in which they worked and the record-breaking speed with which they carried out their orders. He also mentioned that ten members were from Connecticut: Major Francis Kearney, Sergeant Delores Brown, Burnadine Fraser, Audrey Harris, Marian Jackson, Elizabeth McNair, Anna Tarryk, Mary Barlow, Margaret Janet, and Margaret Powell.

Denise Drummond, Legislative Policy Analyst, CWCSEO: Ms. Drummond, testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity, explained how important the 688th Battalion was in resolving the massive logistical shortcomings of World War II. Given the recent trend in other states of honoring the battalion, she argues that now is a better time than ever to formally commemorate them.

K. Robert Lewis, Legislative Committee Chair, American Legion: Mr. Lewis expressed his support for recognizing the members of the 688th Battalion on behalf of the American Legion.

Allison Weir, Executive Director, CT Veterans Legal Center: Ms. Weir pointed out the “unglamorous, but essential for morale, job of processing mail for the service members overseas” that was dutifully undertaken by the women in the 688th Battalion, and argued that their commitment should be honored and celebrated.

Sheila Kearney: As the niece of one of the members of the 688th Battalion, Ms. Kearney wholeheartedly supported honoring the sacrifice made by these women. She pointed out that the resolution as written stated that the members were exclusively African American and Latina and noted that this should be changed, as Caribbean women and other women of color also served in the unit.

Sherri Vogt: Ms. Vogt stated that as a female veteran, honoring women in the military will strengthen the resolve of any women looking into enlisting; as such, she requested that the committee support this resolution.

Jeffrey DeWitt: Mr. DeWitt, the author of a series of Connecticut military history books, noted that the arduousness of the battalion’s task was brought on in large part by the segregated nature of the military at the time. Unfortunately, most people are unaware of the battalion and what they went through though, so he requested that the committee support this resolution.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Sam Sims

Date: 2/26/2025