

BILL ANALYSIS

H.C.R. 93
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Culture, Recreation, & Tourism
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Expert trackers and couriers and skilled fighters, the Native American scouts who served with the United States Army during the frontier era of the mid- to late 1800s played an important part in United States history. The service of these accomplished soldiers began in 1866, after Congress passed legislation authorizing the enlistment of American Indians into the United States Army. Many of the Native Americans who joined the military over the next three decades served as scouts, and they quickly earned respect for their abilities to track the enemy and guide army forces through wilderness territory. Their skills proved especially well-suited during the conflicts between federal forces and American Indian groups that took place in the western states and territories. These scouts made a valuable contribution to the settlement of Texas in this era. Beginning in 1870, individuals of mixed Seminole and African American heritage who had been living in northern Mexico were recruited as scouts by United States commanders in Texas. Based at Fort Duncan, near Eagle Pass, and later at Fort Clark, at present-day Brackettville, the black Seminole soldiers took part in battles with defiant Native American groups in Texas and Mexico and helped tame the turbulent frontier region of the Lone Star State. Known for their courage and fighting skills, four of the black Seminole troops earned the Medal of Honor for their actions. Private Adam Payne was the first, receiving the commendation for his role in a battle with the Kiowa in 1874. The following year, scouts John Ward, Pompey Factor, and Isaac Payne put their lives at risk to rescue their commander, Lieutenant John Lapham Bullis, during a fight with Comanche raiders at Eagle 's Nest Crossing on the Pecos River. Serving as the forerunners of the Native Americans who fought so gallantly in later wars, the American Indian scouts served the United States military with great distinction and provided vital support for the country 's westward expansion.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

August 2007 is designated as American Indian Scouts Month and celebrate the contributions of these individuals as a meaningful chapter in the saga of this nation.