

By: West

H.C.R. No. 16

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The United States Merchant Marine is made up of a
2 fleet of ships used for commercial transport during peace time and
3 as an auxiliary to the United States Navy during times of war; and

4 WHEREAS, The members of the U.S. Merchant Marine served the
5 United States bravely in World War II, suffering the highest
6 casualty rate of any branch of the military; in spite of their
7 dedicated and heroic service, these men and women are not
8 considered veterans under the Social Security Act, thereby denying
9 them the financial support in their later years that is afforded to
10 those whom they served alongside in war time; and

11 WHEREAS, Merchant mariners are considered military personnel
12 in times of war and have an illustrious history of defending this
13 country that started with contributing to American independence by
14 disrupting the British supply chain during the Revolutionary War;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, The Merchant Marine ranks during World War II were
17 filled through campaigns by the War Shipping Administration and
18 military recruiters, served under the auspices of the military,
19 included transferred members from other branches of the military,
20 and were instructed by their commanders about the critical,
21 patriotic importance of service on troop and supply ships; and

22 WHEREAS, The delivery of tanks, aircraft, jeeps, gasoline,
23 medicine, and food rations by the Merchant Marine to troops in every
24 theater of World War II was integral to the Allies' victory; and

1 WHEREAS, Despite accolades from then General Dwight
2 D. Eisenhower and President Franklin D. Roosevelt for the vital
3 military contribution and service in every invasion from Normandy
4 to Okinawa, the merchant mariners were excluded from the GI Bill of
5 Rights enacted in 1945, and for 43 years the U.S. government denied
6 them benefits ranging from housing to health care until Congress
7 awarded them veterans' status in 1988--too late for 125,000
8 mariners to benefit, roughly half of those who had served;
9 moreover, these merchant mariners continue to be denied veterans'
10 benefits under the Social Security Act; and

11 WHEREAS, The Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of
12 World War II Act of 2005 appropriately honors the service of World
13 War II merchant mariners and attempts to rectify the previous
14 denial of financial benefits by providing a monthly monetary
15 benefit, from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, for each
16 Merchant Marine World War II veteran, or surviving spouse, and
17 bestowing veteran status upon them under the Social Security Act,
18 qualifying these brave individuals for Social Security veterans'
19 benefits; now, therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas
21 hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to
22 support the Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War
23 II Act of 2005; and, be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
25 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
26 the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the
27 senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the

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1 Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this
2 resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a
3 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.