

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.