**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS AS THEY HOLD THEIR ONE HUNDRED FIFTY‑FIFTH ANNUAL REUNION CELEBRATION IN COLUMBIA, AND TO DECLARE TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2021, AS “BUFFALO SOLDIERS DAY” IN HONOR OF THE COURAGE AND DEDICATION OF THESE BRAVE INDIVIDUALS.

Whereas, it is altogether fitting and proper for the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives to pause in their  deliberations to congratulate and recognize the Buffalo Soldiers on their 155th anniversary, which they will soon celebrate at a reunion in Columbia; and

Whereas, on July 28, 1866, Congress established six all‑Black peacetime regiments, later consolidated into four–the 9th and 10th Cavalry, and the 24th and 25th Infantry–who became known as “The Buffalo Soldiers.” The primary duty of these regiments was to support the nation’s westward expansion by protecting settlers, building roads and other infrastructure, and guarding the U.S. mail; and

Whereas, serving at posts throughout the Southwest and Great Plains, these soldiers took part in most of the military campaigns during the decades‑long Indian Wars, during which they compiled a distinguished record, with 18 Buffalo Solders awarded the Medal of Honor; and

Whereas, Henry O. Flipper, the first African American West Point Military Academy graduate, was commissioned as a second lieutenant upon graduation in 1877, and assigned to the 10th Cavalry Regiment, becoming the first Black officer to command soldiers in the regular U.S. Army, and paving the way more than a century later for the appointment of the first African American Secretary of Defense in 2021, Lloyd J. Austin III, a retired four‑star general, who was also a West Point Military Academy graduate; and

Whereas, one theory of the origin of the name “Buffalo Soldiers” is that their bravery and ferocity in battle reminded the Native Americans of the way buffalo fought. Whatever the origin, the soldiers considered the name high praise, as buffalo were deeply respected by the Native peoples, and eventually, the image of a buffalo became part of the 10th Cavalry’s regimental crest; and

Whereas, often facing extreme racial prejudice, the all‑Black regiments were not permitted to operate east of the Mississippi River, some White officers refused to command Black regiments, and they sometimes found themselves suffering deadly violence at the hands of civilians near where they were stationed; and

Whereas, Buffalo Soldiers assigned to Fort Brown near the Untied States‑Mexico Border in 1906 suffered career‑ending fates due to racial animosity. Following the death of a White bartender, 167 men serving in the all‑Black 25th Infantry Regiment were dishonorably discharged by President Theodore Roosevelt, after being accused, without evidence, of shooting up the city of Brownsville, Texas, and killing the White man; and

Whereas, suffering this fate without being given the opportunity to defend themselves in legal proceedings, these Buffalo Soldiers also lost their pensions and were denied the ability to serve in federal civil service positions; and

Whereas, in 1972, twenty‑one years after the last segregated U.S. Army regiment was disbanded during the Korean War, the Army conducted a new investigation into the racially charged accusations of 1906, and withdrew the order, exonerating the Buffalo Soldiers and restoring their records to show that each left military service with an honorable discharge; and

Whereas, only one of the 167 falsely accused soldiers lived to see the original 1906 order withdrawn, and no action has ever been taken to provide compensation to their descendants. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, congratulate the Buffalo Soldiers as they hold their one hundred fifty‑fifth annual reunion celebration in Columbia, and declare Tuesday, July 27, 2021, as “Buffalo Soldiers Day” in honor of the courage and dedication of these brave individuals.

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