

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 19, 2015

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 33

Introduced by Assembly Member Atkins
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Eggman and Irwin)
(Coauthor: Senator Fuller)

February 25, 2015

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 33—Relative to women veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 33, as amended, Atkins. Women veterans.

This measure would proclaim June 12, 2015, as Women Veterans' Day and urge all citizens to join in celebrating the many contributions of women to our military forces.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Women have proudly served their country
2 throughout all periods of the history of the United States, whether
3 disguised as male soldiers during the American Revolution and
4 Civil War, as nurses in World War I, or as combat helicopter pilots
5 in Afghanistan; and
6 WHEREAS, Women have formally been a part of the United
7 States Armed Forces since the inception of the Army Nurse Corps
8 in 1901, but have informally served since the inception of our
9 nation's military; and
10 WHEREAS, During the American Revolution, women served
11 on the battlefield alongside the men, mainly as nurses, water
12 bearers, often called "Molly Pitchers," cooks, laundresses, and

1 saboteurs, and despite Army regulations that only men could enlist,
2 women who wanted to join in the fighting circumvented the rules
3 by masquerading as young men or boys; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1917, the Navy announced it would open
5 enlistment to women and about 12,000 female yeomen entered the
6 Navy and filled a variety of ~~jobs~~ *jobs*, including draftsmen,
7 interpreters, couriers, and translators; and

8 WHEREAS, Three hundred seven women enlisted in the Marine
9 Corps during World War I. Like their sisters in the Navy, they
10 were limited to the enlisted ranks and worked mainly in
11 Washington, D.C., doing various administrative jobs. Women's
12 service contributions in World War I showed that they either had,
13 or could quickly learn, nontraditional skills needed by the military;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Following Pearl Harbor, Congress authorized new
16 women's components for each of the services and increased the
17 number of active duty positions in the Army and Navy Nurse
18 Corps. In May 1942, the Army was given the authority to establish
19 the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, also known as the WAACs.
20 The Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps followed suit, but rather
21 than making women an auxiliary component, they opted to enroll
22 them in the reserves on the same basis as their male ~~counterparts~~;
23 *counterparts, while the Army Air Forces enlisted nearly 1,100*
24 *female civilian volunteers who earned their silver wings as Women*
25 *Airforce Service Pilots (WASP); and*

26 WHEREAS, At the end of ~~the war~~ *World War II* in 1945, of the
27 approximately 12 million people remaining in the Armed Forces,
28 about 280,000 were women; and

29 WHEREAS, With the passage of the Women's Armed Services
30 Integration Act of 1948, women became a permanent part of the
31 United States military, but women continued to be restricted to 2
32 percent of the military population. That restriction was finally
33 lifted in 1967 with the amendment of the Women's Armed Services
34 Integration Act, which also opened senior officer ranks to women;
35 and

36 WHEREAS, The early 1990s were a historic time for women
37 in the military with over 40,000 women deploying in support of
38 the Persian Gulf War, making women service members more
39 visible in the eyes of the public. In addition, in 1992, the Defense

1 Authorization Act repealed combat exclusion laws that had
2 prevented women from flying combat aircrafts; and

3 WHEREAS, Women who have served in the United States
4 military are often referred to as “invisible veterans” because their
5 service ~~contributions~~ *contributions*, until the ~~1970s~~ *1970s*, went
6 largely unrecognized by politicians, the media, academia, and the
7 general public; and

8 WHEREAS, Even though women have been officially serving
9 in the military since the creation of the Army Nurse Corps in 1901,
10 they have not always been considered qualified for veteran status
11 for the purpose of receiving benefits from the Department of
12 Veterans Affairs. Even after women were granted veteran status,
13 issues of access, exclusion, and improper management of their
14 health care still remained; and

15 WHEREAS, It was not until well after World War II that women
16 who served in the military began to officially be recognized as
17 veterans; and

18 WHEREAS, In the late 1970s and early 1980s, many of the
19 contributions made by women in World War II were formally
20 recognized through laws that granted these women with veteran
21 status for their time in service. This opened the doors for women
22 to take advantage of programs, opportunities, and benefits from
23 the federal and state governments, the Department of Veterans
24 Affairs, and other veteran service organizations; and

25 WHEREAS, The 1980 decennial census marked the first time
26 that information on women veterans was ever captured in a large
27 national survey. At the time of the 1980 decennial census, women
28 made up just over 2 percent of the veteran population. Today, that
29 proportion has increased to almost 8 percent; and

30 WHEREAS, Over the past 20 years, the Veterans Health
31 Administration (VHA) has introduced initiatives designed to
32 improve health care access and quality of care for women veterans;
33 and

34 WHEREAS, In 2008, VHA’s Women Veterans Health Strategic
35 Health Care Group began a five-year plan to redesign the nation’s
36 health care delivery system for women. A fundamental component
37 of this plan was to ensure that all women veterans had access to
38 comprehensive primary care from skilled women’s health
39 providers; and

1 WHEREAS, There are currently over 2 million women veterans
2 living in the United States and ~~Puerto Rico~~ *Puerto Rico*, and of
3 those 2 million, 165,962 make California their home; now,
4 therefore, be it

5 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
6 *thereof concurring, That the*~~Legislature~~, *Legislature* hereby
7 proclaims June 12, 2015, as Women Veterans’ Day, and urges all
8 citizens to join in celebrating the many contributions of women to
9 our military forces; and be it further

10 *Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies*
11 *of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.*