
THIRD READING

Bill No: SJR 14
Author: Cabaldon (D), et al.
Introduced: 4/22/26
Vote: 21

SENATE MILITARY & VETERANS COMMITTEE: 5-0, 6/8/26
AYES: Archuleta, Grove, McNerney, Menjivar, Umberg

SUBJECT: World War II Nurses Congressional Gold Medal Act

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This resolution urges California's Congressional delegation to support federal legislation awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to the members of the United States Army Nurse Corps and Navy Nurse Corps who served during World War II.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Authorizes Congress to award the Congressional Gold Medal to individuals or groups whose achievements or service have had a significant impact on the history and culture of the United States.
- 2) Recognizes the Congressional Gold Medal as one of the highest civilian honors awarded by the United States Congress.

This bill:

- 1) Urges California's Congressional delegation to cosponsor and support Senate Bill 2195 and House Resolution 4901, federal legislation that would award the Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of the United States Army Nurse Corps and Navy Nurse Corps.

- 2) Recognizes the service and sacrifices of military nurses who served during World War II in combat zones, aboard hospital ships, evacuation aircraft, military hospitals, and prisoner-of-war camps.

Background

During World War II, more than 73,000 women served in the United States Army Nurse Corps and Navy Nurse Corps. These nurses provided critical medical care to wounded service members in combat theaters throughout Europe, the Pacific, and other operational areas around the world.

Army and Navy nurses served as military personnel and commissioned officers within the Armed Forces. Although they were noncombat personnel, many served in frontline conditions and were exposed to bombings, sniper attacks, disease outbreaks, and prisoner-of-war captivity while continuing to care for injured troops.

Military nurses played a significant role in improving battlefield survival rates and maintaining military medical operations during the war. Their service also extended beyond active combat operations into postwar humanitarian and recovery efforts, including care for victims of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and medical support in refugee camps throughout Europe.

At the time, opportunities for women in military service were limited. Nursing represented one of the few military career fields in which women could serve close to combat operations as commissioned officers. Despite their wartime service, many women who served in military nursing roles did not initially receive equal status, compensation, or veterans benefits comparable to those received by male service members.

The Congressional Gold Medal represents one of Congress's most significant forms of national recognition. The honor dates back to the American Revolution, when Congress first used the medal to recognize extraordinary service to the nation. Unlike military decorations awarded through the Department of Defense, the Congressional Gold Medal is authorized through an act of Congress and signed into law by the President. Each medal is individually designed by the United States Mint to commemorate the specific achievements, service, or contributions of the recipient.

Comments

According to the author: "The act of honoring those who served is not merely ceremonial; it is an affirmation of the values a society holds dear. More than

73,000 women answered their country's call during World War II, serving as Army and Navy nurses in combat zones, aboard hospital ships, and in prisoner-of-war camps, often without full military status, equal pay, or the veteran benefits their service had plainly earned. Their sacrifice is California's story too, and SJR 14 urges California's Congressional delegation to cosponsor and advance federal legislation awarding these women the Congressional Gold Medal.”

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: No Local: No

SUPPORT: (Verified 6/9/26)

None received

OPPOSITION: (Verified 6/9/26)

None received

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6/10/26 16:52:24

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