

**Introduced by Senator Mendoza**

April 6, 2016

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 128—Relative to the Buffalo Soldiers.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 128, as introduced, Mendoza. The Buffalo Soldiers.

This measure would honor the Buffalo Soldiers for changing the face of the United States Armed Forces forever through their record of unique accomplishments.

Fiscal committee: no.

1       WHEREAS, On July 28, 1866, by an act of the United States  
2 Congress, African American men were allowed to join the  
3 post-Civil War army in special segregated units — the 9th and  
4 10th Cavalry Regiments of the United States Army; and  
5       WHEREAS, Comprised of former slaves, freemen, and black  
6 Civil War soldiers, the Buffalo Soldiers were the first African  
7 Americans to serve in the United States Army during peacetime.  
8 During the latter period of the nineteenth century, the soldiers of  
9 the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments were assigned to Fort Riley,  
10 Kansas, and other areas of the Midwest, where they helped to  
11 maintain order between Native Americans and the settlers, built  
12 forts and roads, patrolled borders, and protected mail coaches and  
13 railroad construction crews; and  
14       WHEREAS, Out of respect for their courage and fighting spirit,  
15 as well as for their dark curly hair and the thick coats made from  
16 buffalo hide that they wore during winter, the Native Americans

1 of the Midwestern plains honored the soldiers of the 9th and 10th  
2 Cavalry Regiments with the nickname of “Buffalo Soldiers”; and  
3 WHEREAS, When the Indian Wars ended in the 1890s, the  
4 Buffalo Soldiers went on to fight in Cuba in the 1898  
5 Spanish-American War and acted as rangers in Yosemite and  
6 Sequoia national parks; and

7 WHEREAS, The Buffalo Soldiers of the regular African  
8 American army regiments were among the first to serve as park  
9 rangers in the newly created National Park Service; and

10 WHEREAS, Approximately 500 Buffalo Soldiers from the 9th,  
11 10th, 24th and 25th regiments served in Yosemite and nearby  
12 Sequoia national parks, with duties from evicting poachers and  
13 timber thieves to extinguishing forest fires; and

14 WHEREAS, The accomplishments of the Buffalo Soldiers as  
15 park rangers include building the first trail to the top of Mount  
16 Whitney in Sequoia National Park, building the first arboretum in  
17 Yosemite National Park, and clearing miles of trails and building  
18 roads into the national parks for visitor enjoyment; and

19 WHEREAS, Charles Young, the third African American  
20 graduate of West Point, served as acting military superintendent  
21 of Sequoia National Park in 1903; and

22 WHEREAS, Even though the Buffalo Soldiers wore the uniform  
23 of the United States Army, the performance of their duties  
24 presented challenges due to racial prejudice. Buffalo soldiers  
25 serving in Yosemite and Sequoia national parks had to fulfill their  
26 duties using diplomacy; and

27 WHEREAS, During World War II, members of the Buffalo  
28 Soldiers branched out and formed into famous units, including the  
29 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions, the famed Tuskegee Airmen that  
30 included the 99th Fighter (Pursuit) Group, the 332nd Fighter “Red  
31 Tails” Group, and the 761st Tank Battalion of the third Army; and

32 WHEREAS, Due to an executive order issued in 1948 by  
33 President Harry Truman eliminating racial segregation and  
34 discrimination in the United States Armed Forces, the last all-black  
35 units disbanded during the first half of the 1950s, and, in 2005,  
36 the nation’s oldest living Buffalo Soldier, Mark Matthews, passed  
37 away in Washington, D.C., at 111 years of age; now, therefore, be  
38 it

39 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*  
40 *thereof concurring,* That the Legislature honors the Buffalo

1 Soldiers for changing the face of the United States Armed Forces  
2 forever through their record of unique accomplishments, which  
3 testify to their skill, discipline, integrity, and heroism, and  
4 recognizes and thanks their families and descendants for sharing  
5 an inspiring legacy that speaks to the sense of excellence, potential,  
6 and patriotism shared by all Americans; and be it further  
7 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of  
8 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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