

House Resolution 1496

By: Representatives Bell of the 75<sup>th</sup>, Moore of the 91<sup>st</sup>, Sharper of the 177<sup>th</sup>, Sanchez of the 42<sup>nd</sup>, and McClain of the 109<sup>th</sup>

### A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the life and legacy of Robert Elmo Nichols, Sr.; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, from 1798 until 1942, African Americans were denied the opportunity to serve  
3 in the United States Marine Corps; and
- 4 WHEREAS, in 1942, under a presidential directive issued by Franklin D. Roosevelt, African  
5 American men were finally allowed to enlist in the Marine Corps, becoming known as the  
6 Montford Point Marines-the first Black Marines in American history; and
- 7 WHEREAS, Robert Elmo Nichols, Sr. was born on September 23, 1923, in Norfolk,  
8 Virginia, to the late Jeffrey Napoleon Nichols and Maggie Sykes Nichols; and
- 9 WHEREAS, a proud graduate of Booker T. Washington High School, Class of 1943, Robert,  
10 affectionately known as "Elmo," answered the call to serve his country during World War  
11 II and became one of the pioneering African Americans recruited into the Marine Corps; and
- 12 WHEREAS, he was assigned to the 54th Defense Battalion at Montford Point, the segregated  
13 training facility established for Black Marine recruits in Jacksonville, North Carolina; and

14 WHEREAS, following his honorable service in World War II, Robert continued his pursuit  
15 of excellence by attending Virginia State College, where he earned a degree in Business  
16 Administration and received his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the United States  
17 Army Reserve through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps; and

18 WHEREAS, while serving as an elementary school teacher, he continued his distinguished  
19 military career and ultimately retired from the Army Reserve with the rank of Lieutenant  
20 Colonel; and

21 WHEREAS, Robert further devoted 34 years of service to the Norfolk Naval Supply Center,  
22 exemplifying dedication, professionalism, and commitment to public service; and

23 WHEREAS, in 2011, Robert Elmo Nichols, Sr., along with his fellow Montford Point  
24 Marines, received the Congressional Gold Medal in Washington, D.C., a long-overdue  
25 national recognition of their courage, sacrifice, and historic role in reshaping the United  
26 States military; and

27 WHEREAS, Robert E. Nichols, Sr.'s life stands as a testament to perseverance, leadership,  
28 integrity, and trailblazing service that helped break racial barriers and pave the way for future  
29 generations of Marines and service members.

30 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that  
31 the members of this body join in honoring the life and legacy of Robert Elmo Nichols, Sr.,  
32 and express their deepest and most sincere regret at his passing.

33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
34 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the  
35 family of Robert Elmo Nichols, Sr.