

2014 -- S 2728

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LC005096
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

SENATE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THAT THE RHODE ISLAND DELEGATION TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS SUPPORT FEDERAL LEGISLATION THAT WOULD AWARD THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE 65TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, KNOWN AS THE BORINQUENEERS, FOR THEIR HONORABLE MILITARY SERVICE

Introduced By: Senators Pichardo, Felag, Jabour, Picard, and Metts

Date Introduced: March 05, 2014

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

1 WHEREAS, On March 2, 1899, by an Act of Congress, the first Puerto Rican military
2 unit was established. It was a volunteer battalion that grew to regiment size by 1900. A second
3 Act of Congress made the Puerto Rican Regiment part of the United States Army on May 27,
4 1908; and

5 WHEREAS, The 65th Infantry Regiment, while not deployed in World War I, was the
6 first unit of the United States Army to fight German forces. On March 21, 1915, a German
7 supply ship tried to force its way out of San Juan Harbor to deliver supplies to German U-boats in
8 the Atlantic, but was stopped and forced to surrender the ship and supplies by Puerto Rican forces
9 positioned at El Morro Castle; and

10 WHEREAS, In 1920, the Puerto Rican Regiment was renamed the 65th Infantry
11 Regiment by the reorganization Act of 1920. During World War II, the “Borinqueneers” were
12 sent to guard the Panama Canal. Later in the war, in 1944, they were deployed to North Africa,
13 Italy, Corsica, France, and the Maritime Alps, where they engaged in their first combat of World
14 War II and suffered 47 casualties; and

15 WHEREAS, It was during the Korean War that the 65th Infantry Regiment, the
16 “Borinqueneers,” became noted for its valor, courage and exploits on the battlefield. In August of
17 1950, the 65th Infantry Regiment landed at Pusan, South Korea and faced a grave situation as
18 United States and United Nations forces were reeling from the attack from the north by

1 communist forces in June of 1950. The 65th Infantry Regiment immediately saw combat, helping
2 the United States to hold the Pusan perimeter and later taking an active part in the breakout that
3 drove the communist forces back to the north; and

4 WHEREAS, Later in the Korean War, after Chinese forces had intervened and attacked
5 United States and United Nations forces, the United States Eighth Army had been overrun and the
6 1st Marine Division was completely encircled. The Marines fought their way to the port city of
7 Hungnam, the only escape route available, and it was the 65th Infantry Regiment that was tasked
8 with the crucial assignment of holding the perimeter around that vital city. The 65th Infantry
9 Regiment held their positions thereby allowing many thousands of United States and United
10 Nations forces to escape back to South Korea; and

11 WHEREAS, Altogether, the 65th Infantry Regiment during the Korean War saw military
12 action in nine major campaigns and earned a Presidential Unit Citation, a Meritorious Unit
13 Commendation, and two Republic of Korea Unit Citations. Individual members earned four
14 Distinguished Service Crosses and 124 Silver Stars. More than 750 had perished and 2,400 had
15 been wounded; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1959, the regiment was allotted to the Puerto Rican National Guard,
17 where the 65th Infantry Regiment still serves to this day. In defense of our nation since 1899,
18 members of the 65th Infantry Regiment have earned 628 Bronze Stars, 258 Silver stars, 10
19 Distinguished Service Crosses, and more than 2,700 Purple Hearts; now, therefore be it

20 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
21 hereby respectfully requests that the Rhode Island delegation to the United States Congress and
22 the United States Congress support legislation that would award the Congressional Medal to the
23 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the “Borinqueneers,” for their honorable military service; and
24 be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
26 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation, the
27 Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate Majority
28 Leader.

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