

2022 -- H 7589

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

HOUSE RESOLUTION

HONORING THE LAST LIVING RHODE ISLAND TUSKEGEE AIRMAN, MR. VICTOR
WALTER BUTLER

Introduced By: Representatives Kislak, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Corvese, Alzate,
McNamara, Filippi, Solomon, Fellela, and Bennett

Date Introduced: March 01, 2022

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Airmen were a distinguished and heroic group of African-
2 American fighter and bomber pilots and airmen who served our nation with valor and bravery
3 during World War II, despite facing systemic discrimination on a daily basis and not being treated
4 equally under the Constitution and laws of the United States; and

5 WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Airmen formed the 332nd Expeditionary Operations Group
6 and the 477th Bombardment Group of the United States Army Air Forces. In addition to the
7 pilots, the Tuskegee Airmen name also applies to the navigators, bombardiers, mechanics,
8 instructors, crew chiefs, nurses, cooks and other support personnel who served our nation so
9 honorably during our time of greatest need during the Second World War; and

10 WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African-American military aviators in
11 the United States Armed Forces, while Black Americans in the military were still subject to the
12 racist Jim Crow laws that applied in many states. In addition, the American military and much of
13 the Federal Government was racially segregated. Yet despite this discrimination, the Tuskegee
14 Airmen still served our nation and would go on to become one of the most honored American
15 military groups of the Second World War; and

16 WHEREAS, The Tuskegee Airmen became famous for their skill in flying the North
17 American P-51 Mustang fighter planes as they did battle over the skies of Europe protecting the
18 American bombers from the Messerschmitt and Focke-Wulf fighter planes. All accounts of their
19 service record show that they did a magnificent job of protecting their bombers, and often paid a

1 high price in loss of life in doing so; and

2 WHEREAS, Overall, the Tuskegee Airmen saw combat in 1578 combat missions. They
3 destroyed 112 enemy aircraft in the air and 150 on the ground. They were honored with three
4 Distinguished Unit Citations, 14 Bronze Stars, 96 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 744 Air
5 Medals; and

6 WHEREAS, Victor Walter Butler, the last living Rhode Island Tuskegee Airman, served
7 our nation with distinction from 1941 to 1946. Mr. Butler has always been a hard-working man
8 who always strived tirelessly to provide for his family and loved ones. Mr. Butler was the first
9 African-American to work for Brown and Sharpe and worked for the company for 34 years. Mr.
10 Butler was also a successful businessman who owned and operated the “Victor Butler Automatic
11 Screw Machine Repair” company for eighteen years; and

12 WHEREAS, Mr. Butler is the proud father of Gary Butler, Yvonne Butler, Victoria
13 Butler, Michelle Butler and Carolyn Butler, and is the beloved grandfather of Alfred Green III,
14 Anthony Green, Michael Grayson, William Tutt Jr., Wesley Tutt, Ronelle Tutt, Denisha Ford,
15 and Nicole Harrington. Mr. Butler also has nine great-grandchildren, and three great-great
16 grandchildren; now, therefore be it

17 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
18 honors and thanks Mr. Victor Walter Butler, the last living Rhode Island Tuskegee Airman, for
19 his distinguished and heroic service to our nation during World War II while at the same time
20 serving in a military that was then racially segregated and training in States operating under the
21 discriminatory Jim Crow laws; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
23 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Victor Walter Butler.

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