



Senate Bill 17 Sponsor Testimony

State Senator Michele Reynolds

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs & Public Safety committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on this important legislation to honor the courageous and trailblazing women of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion.

I am honored to introduce SB 17 with my joint sponsor Senator Hearcel Craig to designate March 9th as "6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day" in Ohio. This legislation recognizes the extraordinary service and sacrifice of the only all-Black, all-female battalion to serve overseas during World War II. March 9th holds significance as it marks the day these remarkable women began their deployment in Birmingham, England, to tackle the overwhelming backlog of mail. These brave women took on the critical task of processing approximately 17 million letters and packages, ensuring that American service members remained connected with their loved ones back home. Their dedication was vital to troop morale and, ultimately, to the war effort itself.

The "Six Triple Eight," as they were known, overcame significant adversity, including racial and gender discrimination, as well as harsh working conditions in European theaters of war. Despite these challenges, they completed their mission in record time, working around the clock in three shifts, seven days a week. Their efficiency, resilience, and unwavering commitment to duty stand as a testament to their place in history and as an inspiration to future generations.

It is also worth noting that the 6888th Battalion's commander, Major Charity Adams, was a proud Ohioan, born in Columbia, South Carolina, but raised and educated in Dayton, Ohio. She became the first African American woman to be commissioned as an officer in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and exemplified exceptional leadership throughout her service. Major Adams' connection to Ohio further underscores the importance of this recognition within our state.

Thanks to the leadership of U.S. Senator Jerry Moran and his colleagues, the members of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion were recently awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor Congress can bestow. However, recognition at the state level is equally important. By designating March 9th as "6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day," we ensure that Ohioans never forget the legacy of these extraordinary women and their contributions to our nation's history.

In addition to commemorating their service, this designation serves as an educational tool, allowing future generations to learn about the pivotal role

African American women played in World War II and the broader struggle for equality in our armed forces.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and join me in honoring the legacy of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion. Their story is one of perseverance and patriotism thus it is only fitting that we enshrine their contributions into Ohio law.

I will now invite my joint sponsor- Senator Craig to say a few words.