

By: Representatives Williams-Barnes,
Anthony, Blackmon, Hudson, Taylor

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 71

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DISTINGUISHED
2 SERVICE OF UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS CORPORAL DAVID POTTS, SR.,
3 RENDERED TO THIS STATE AND NATION AS ONE OF THE FIRST
4 AFRICAN-AMERICAN MARINES AND MEMBER OF THE HISTORIC MONTFORD POINT
5 MARINES.

6 WHEREAS, the City of Gulfport, Mississippi, is proud to be
7 considered the home of community friend and historical legend,
8 United States Marine Corps Corporal David Potts, Sr., a member of
9 the Montford Point Marines, the first African-American Marines
10 training facility established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt
11 in 1942; and

12 WHEREAS, from his humble beginnings as the third of eight
13 children born in Montgomery, Alabama, to his late parents, Mr.
14 Robert Potts and Mrs. Emma Boykin Potts on June 20, 1924, Mr.
15 Potts was raised on the premier tenets of faith, education and
16 perseverance, along with his four brothers and three sisters, and
17 united in Christian fellowship with Mount Calvary Baptist Church
18 not long after his family relocated from Montgomery to Gulfport,
19 Mississippi, when he was five years of age; and



20 WHEREAS, after graduating from 33rd Avenue High School, Mr.
21 Potts answered the patriotic call of duty, proving to be both a
22 distinguished officer and gentleman, he was inducted into the
23 elite fraternity of the "always faithful" United States Marine
24 Corps on May 14, 1943, as a member of the Montford Point Marines,
25 and shouldered the privilege of upholding the banner of protecting
26 the rights and freedoms afforded us in the iconic symbol of Lady
27 Liberty from 1943 to 1946 while serving during World War II in the
28 Asiatic-Pacific Campaign, before receiving an honorable discharge;
29 and

30 WHEREAS, the historical significance of the Montford Point
31 Marines, as the first all African-American training facility at
32 Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, carries great weight among veterans
33 throughout the nation, having trained some 20,000 African-American
34 recruits during its operative years of 1942 until its closing in
35 1949 whose valor and performance while serving in Saipan, Guam,
36 Tinian, Pelelieu, Iwo Jima and Okinawa proved more than honorably
37 tantamount to that of their comrades without regard to race,
38 color, creed or national origin; and

39 WHEREAS, upon his return home, Corporal Potts united in holy
40 matrimony with his first love, Miss Elvera Cooley, bequeathing to
41 her his heart and his last name, and shortly thereafter, embarked
42 upon the responsibility of making an earnest living for his wife
43 and soon growing family of four sons and three daughters by
44 attending several trade schools and completing several technical



45 courses, which would all work concertedly to enable him to
46 capitalize on entrepreneurship when he opened Potts Home Appliance
47 in 1973; and

48 WHEREAS, in addition to operating his own successful business
49 establishment, Corporal Potts also served his fellow comrades of
50 battle by devoting 27 years of extended and revered service for
51 Veterans Affairs in Gulfport before retiring to devote his time to
52 his booming appliance business; and

53 WHEREAS, as a resident and esteemed citizen and community
54 pillar, Corporal Potts has experienced the transformational
55 changes of American society and various moments of iconic history,
56 and continues to rely wholeheartedly on God as the driving force
57 to sustain and motivate him through the circumstances, trials and
58 triumphs of life, which resonates with his profound faith and the
59 unyielding support of his family through an exemplary life of
60 exuding the love of Christ as evidenced by his service as a loyal
61 member of Mount Calvary Baptist Church where he was ordained as a
62 deacon on May 9, 1972; and

63 WHEREAS, he subsequently united in fellowship with the
64 Forrest Heights Baptist Church in 1986, where he continues his
65 faithful service as Chairman of the Deacon Board, Vice Chairman of
66 the Trustee Board, Second Vice President of the State Brotherhood
67 Layman's Association, National Baptist Convention delegate,
68 Benevolent Fund Treasurer and former president of the Gulf Coast
69 District Brotherhood from 1990 to 1997; and



70 WHEREAS, in addition to fulfilling the obligations owed his
71 church, Corporal Potts' social and civic affiliations serve as the
72 preeminent benchmark of excellence, rooted initially in civil
73 rights activism, and his notable leadership presence and rapport
74 as a Master Mason of Soria City Lodge #542 and a member of the
75 American Legion Post No. 223 serve as the perfect canvas for the
76 backdrop of his life of honor, integrity and prestige, as made
77 known by the numerous honors and awards bestowed upon him,
78 including: receipt of the David Potts Distinguished Community
79 Service Award on May 7, 1993; receipt of the Montford Point
80 Marines Congressional Gold Medal as a surviving member of the all
81 African-American Montford Point Marines on June 28, 2012; honored
82 by United States Representative Steven Palazzo and Gulfport Mayor
83 George Schloegel as a member of the Montford Point Marines on
84 October 17, 2012; honored by the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care
85 System and the Black Heritage Committee during the Martin Luther
86 King, Jr., celebration on January 16, 2013; and

87 WHEREAS, when God saw fit to send his chariot angels to
88 escort Corporal Potts' first wife, Mrs. Elvera Cooley Potts, to
89 her heavenly home, he was not slack concerning his promise
90 recorded in Proverbs 18:22, "He who finds a wife finds a
91 good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord," and not having him
92 be in lack of love, orchestrated his path to intersect with Ms.
93 Ammie Johnson, with whom he would share his hand in a second
94 marriage; and



95 WHEREAS, Corporal Potts willingly assumes the patriarchal
96 role of his family, seizing the reins as the unifying tie that
97 binds his family together, as he seeks to always be their
98 provider, and remains instrumental in their support and
99 encouragement, as he sprinkles their lives with nuggets of
100 infinite wisdom and a fervent agape love; and

101 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to
102 commend the life of a remarkably genuine and selfless individual
103 such as Corporal Potts, whose light continues to be a beam of
104 inspiration illuminating the path of hope for all he encounters
105 along this earthly sojourn:

106 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
107 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
108 commend the life and legacy of United States Marine Corps Corporal
109 David Potts, Sr., and express grateful appreciation for the life
110 of service and sacrifice he provided to this nation as one of the
111 first African-American Marines and member of the historic Montford
112 Point Marines.

113 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
114 furnished to United States Marine Corps Corporal David Potts, Sr.,
115 and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

