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Legislative District 28
Charles County

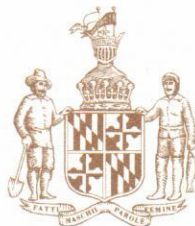
Ways and Means Committee

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House Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 15, 2022

Testimony in Support of House Bill 548

Commemorative Days – Montford Point Marines Commemoration Day

Good afternoon Chairman Pendergrass, Vice-Chairman Pena-Melnyk and Health and Government Operations Committee Members. For the records, I'm Delegate Edith Patterson presenting HB548 – a proposal to create the Montford Point Marines Commemoration Day in Maryland.

The Montford Point Marines were the first African Americans who enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps following the establishment of the Fair Employment Practices Commission in 1941. Although we know about the Tuskegee Airmen and Buffalo Soldiers, most civilians and even many in the military do not know of the struggles, distinction and courage of the Montford Point Marines.

Established in 1942 as a separate segregated training facility for African American service men, the facility was built in a swampy, wildlife ridden forest area deprived of comparable facilities as their white counterparts. Withstanding the hardships and racism, the Montford Point Marines took part in three major wars and several smaller conflicts while dealing with discrimination within the Corps and worldwide. In 1948, President Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9981, which moved to abandon segregation as a federal policy and required desegregation on the entire military. This action led to the deactivation of Montford Point as a training facility. However, Montford Point Marines were important in all major campaigns of World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War and helped spread liberty and end the political disruption around the world.

For the reasons cited, I am requesting a favorable report for HB 548.

Delegate Edith J. Patterson – D28