

By Senator Soto

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Senate Memorial

A memorial to the President and the Congress of the United States, urging them to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the United States 65th Infantry Regiment, the Borinqueneers.

WHEREAS, the United States 65th Infantry Regiment, the Borinqueneers, traces its lineage to the "Puerto Rican Regiment U.S. Volunteers," which was authorized by Congress on March 2, 1899, as a mounted battalion consisting of four companies, and

WHEREAS, after Puerto Rico patriotically requested that the selective service draft law be extended to Puerto Rico as the United States entered the conflict in World War I, the Borinqueneers rallied a force of nearly 2,000, defending the Panama Canal, firing on the German supply ship Odenwald from El Morro Castle in Puerto Rico, and fighting valiantly on a number of fronts for liberty, and

WHEREAS, during World War II, the Borinqueneers gallantly served in North Africa and Europe, winning the Naples-Foggian, Rome-Arne, Central Europe, and Rhineland battle campaign awards, and, after the war, were assigned dangerous security, anti-sabotage, and other occupation missions around Kaiserslautern and Mannheim, Germany, making them one of the last units to return home at war's end, and

WHEREAS, during the Korean War, some 61,000 Puerto Rican soldiers served with the United States Army, 6,000 of them with the Borinqueneers, which, again, covered themselves in glory, distinguishing themselves over a 3-year period with nine Korean battle campaign awards, the Presidential and Meritorious Unit

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30 commendations, two Korean Presidential Unit citations, the Greek  
31 Gold Medal, the Navy Unit commendation, and many other awards  
32 for bravery, and launching the last regimental bayonet assault  
33 in United States Army history, and

34 WHEREAS, the Borinqueneers were awarded nine battle  
35 campaign awards for bravery between 1950 and 1953 and, in World  
36 War I, World War II, and the Korean War, combined, were awarded  
37 ten Distinguished Service Crosses, 258 Silver Stars, 628 Bronze  
38 Stars, more than 2,700 Purple Hearts, and many other individual  
39 awards, and

40 WHEREAS, legendary United States Army General Douglas  
41 MacArthur lauded the gallantry of the Borinqueneers, crediting  
42 them with a resolute will to victory and invincible loyalty to  
43 the United States, saying, "They write a brilliant record of  
44 achievement in battle and I am proud indeed to have them in this  
45 command. I wish that we might have many more like them!," and

46 WHEREAS, in 1959, the Borinqueneers passed their colors to  
47 the National Guard of the United States Territory of Puerto  
48 Rico, the only time in United States Army History that active  
49 unit colors were not retired, but, instead, turned over to a  
50 National Guard unit, and

51 WHEREAS, today, the legacy of the Borinqueneers lives on in  
52 the National Guard in Puerto Rico, which continues to bravely  
53 defend the United States in the ongoing War on Terrorism, and

54 WHEREAS, many of those who returned to civilian life after  
55 serving with the Borinqueneers have gone on to serve in  
56 leadership positions as respected businessmen, corporate  
57 executives, religious leaders, lawyers, doctors, educators,  
58 bankers, and political leaders, and

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59 WHEREAS, the Borinqueneers selflessly served and  
60 sacrificed, shedding blood for our democracy and helping to  
61 ensure our prosperity as they, themselves, faced segregation,  
62 discrimination, and unequal American citizenship, always loyally  
63 protecting our nation and nobly fighting for the good of all,  
64 and

65 WHEREAS, these brave warriors, the Borinqueneers, deserve a  
66 place with all American heroes, and should be honored,  
67 commended, and never forgotten for their epic feats, and

68 WHEREAS, the Congressional Gold Medal, along with the  
69 Presidential Medal of Freedom, is the highest civilian award in  
70 the United States, awarded to persons who have performed an  
71 achievement that has an impact on American history and culture  
72 that is likely to be recognized as a major achievement in the  
73 recipient's field long after the achievement, NOW, THEREFORE,

74

75 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

76

77 That, in recognition of the bravery and sacrifice of the  
78 United States 65th Infantry Regiment, the Borinqueneers, we urge  
79 the President and the Congress of the United States to award the  
80 Congressional Gold Medal to these true heroes and defenders of  
81 our great nation.

82 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
83 dispatched to the President of the United States, to the  
84 President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the  
85 United States House of Representatives, to each member of the  
86 Florida delegation to the United States Congress, to the Puerto  
87 Rico Resident Commissioner, to the President of the United

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88 States 65th Infantry Regiment Association, the chairman of the  
89 Hispanic Achievers Grant Council, and the chairman of the  
90 Borinqueneer Congressional Gold Medal Alliance.