

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013**

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HOUSE RESOLUTION 1256

Sponsors: Representative Steinburg (Primary Sponsor).

For a complete list of Sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly Web Site.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

June 9, 2014

1 A HOUSE RESOLUTION URGING CONGRESS TO ENACT LEGISLATION THAT WILL
2 LEAD TO THE RECOGNITION OF WORLD WAR II COASTWISE MERCHANT
3 MARINERS AS VETERANS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES.

4 Whereas, during World War II, United States Merchant Mariners who served along
5 the coastline of the United States, and were known as Coastwise Merchant Mariners, helped to
6 transport materials, including food, clothing, and weapons, to members of the United States
7 Armed Forces serving on three continents; and

8 Whereas, the Coastwise Merchant Mariners bravely performed their duties even as
9 they were in danger of attack from German U-boats operating along our nation's coastal waters;
10 and

11 Whereas, many of the Coastwise Merchant Mariners were elderly, handicapped,
12 women, and underage children who stepped forward in the time of a national crisis to ensure
13 that the members of the United States Armed Forces were sufficiently supplied as they fought
14 enemy forces; and

15 Whereas, because of administrative rules and decisions made by the United States
16 Navy, many Coastwise Merchant Mariners who served during World War II were not
17 recognized as veterans and thus were not eligible for the veterans benefits they had earned; and

18 Whereas, in the years following World War II, as a result of some changes in
19 federal law and federal rules and regulations, some of the Coastwise Merchant Mariners
20 previously denied veterans benefits were finally recognized as veterans and therefore entitled to
21 the same benefits as other veterans of the United States Armed Forces; and

22 Whereas, despite the past recognition of some Coastwise Merchant Mariners as
23 veterans, as many as 30,000 Coastwise Merchant Mariners may never get that recognition due
24 to the documentation required to prove their service during World War II; and

25 Whereas, through no fault of these courageous individuals, much of the
26 documentation proving they served their country during World War II as Coastwise Merchant
27 Mariners has been lost or destroyed or was never recorded; Now, therefore,
28 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

29 **SECTION 1.** The House of Representatives honors the brave men, women, and
30 children who valiantly served our country as Coastwise Merchant Mariners during World War
31 II.

32 **SECTION 2.** The House of Representatives urges Congress to do the following:

- 33 (1) Conduct congressional inquiries into (i) the lack of recognition given to the
34 World War II Coastwise Merchant Mariners who were lost in action without



1 having been recognized by our nation as veterans and (ii) the reason World
2 War II Coastwise Merchant Mariners records that are known to exist have
3 not been moved to the National Records Center for use by families and
4 researchers in accordance with agreements between the National Archives
5 and Records Administration and the Department of Defense.

- 6 (2) Enact legislation that expands the types of acceptable documentation that
7 Coastwise Merchant Mariners may use to prove their service during World
8 War II, and to thereafter require that those who can provide the
9 documentation be finally recognized as veterans entitled to the
10 accompanying benefits.

11 **SECTION 3.** The Principal Clerk shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution
12 to the President of the United States, the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of
13 Representatives, the President Pro Tempore and the Secretary of the United States Senate, the
14 members of the North Carolina Congressional delegation, and the news media of North
15 Carolina.

16 **SECTION 4.** This resolution is effective upon adoption.