HOUSE SIMPLE RESOLUTION DRHR40671-LG-141 (01/08)

Sponsors:	Representative Davis.
Referred to:	

1   A HOUSE RESOLUTION URGING CONGRESS TO ENACT LEGISLATION DIRECTING
2   A FEDERAL AGENCY TO DESIGNATE AT LEAST ONE CITY IN THE UNITED
3   STATES EACH YEAR AN "AMERICAN WORLD WAR II HERITAGE CITY," WITH
4   WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA, AS THE FIRST CITY TO BE SO
5   DESIGNATED.
6   Whereas, over the past few years, several members of Congress have introduced
7 legislation directing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate at least one city in the
8 United States each year as an "American World War II Heritage City" based on the fact that
9 many cities across the United States contributed to the war effort during World War II; and
10   Whereas, the legislation set out the criteria for establishing the designation to be
11 based on the following: (1) contributions by a city to the war effort during World War II,
12 including those related to defense manufacturing, bond drives, service in the Armed Forces,
13 and the presence of military facilities within the city, and (2) efforts by a city to preserve the
14 history of the city's contributions during World War II, including through the establishment of
15 preservation organizations or museums, restoration of World War II facilities, and recognition
16 of World War II veterans; and
17   Whereas, the legislation suggested that the City of Wilmington should be designated
18 as the first "American World War II Heritage City" based upon the following findings:
19   (1)   During World War II, Wilmington was the country's unique wartime
20   boomtown, aptly and officially named "The Defense Capital of the State."
21   (2)   Wilmington based and trained all five military services which were the
22   predecessor to the air force at the Wilmington Airport, the Army at Camp
23   Davis and Fort Fisher, the Navy at Fort Caswell, the Coast Guard at
24   Wrightsville Beach, and the Marine Corps at Camp Lejeune.
25   (3)   The North Carolina Shipbuilding Company of Wilmington, the State's
26   largest employer at that time with 23,000 employees, constructed 243 cargo
27   vessels which provided goods and equipment to our soldiers.
28   (4)   Wilmington provided the following: the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad
29   headquarters; three housing camps for German prisoners of war; a major
30   training base for P–47 fighters; defense industries that produced goods and
31   equipment; a British patrol base; and a shipping point for "Lend-Lease"
32   supplies to the Allies.
33   (5)   Wilmington dispatched thousands of area men and women to fight the
34   enemy on land, sea, and air as Navy frogmen, P–51 fighter aces, Tuskegee
35   Airmen, submarine skippers, bomber pilots, Marine riflemen, Army
36   artillerymen, physicians and nurses, and volunteers of all sorts.

     (6)   The Wilmington area lost 248 men as a result of their courageous efforts to defend the United States, and two New Hanover High School graduates received the Congressional Medal of Honor and numerous others received high decorations for valor, including the Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, and Distinguished Flying Cross.

     (7)   Wilmington's strategic position made it vulnerable to enemy attack by German U-boats, which marauded shipping off our beaches. In July 1943, in perhaps the only German attack on the United States, a U-boat fired at the Ethel-Dow chemical plant in Wilmington. Wilmington endured this attack, as well as constant civilian defense restrictions and air raid drills, including black-outs and dim-outs. The city's population more than doubled with the influx of military personnel, forcing locals to cope with strain on housing and schools, transportation, medical and social services, law enforcement, and food supply; and

Whereas, further evidence that the City of Wilmington deserves to earn the first designation as an "American World War II Heritage City" include the following:

     (1)   Since 1961, Wilmington has been home to the World War II Battleship North Carolina, the State's memorial to its World War II dead now expanded as a memorial to its subsequent veterans, and a major tourism attraction and public venue.

     (2)   Wilmington is promoted as a World War II history tourism destination.

     (3)   Wilmington has honored its two World War II Medal of Honor recipients by naming a middle school, city park, and city street for them as well as erecting a memorial to them at New Hanover High School.

     (4)   In 2000, Wilmington established the World War II Wilmington Home Front Coalition, a nonprofit corporation, whose mission is to identify, preserve, and interpret the area's rich wartime legacy.

     (5)   Wilmington has saved, renovated, and restored its World War II USO building, the Hannah Block Historic USO/Community Arts Center public venue, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, and celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2016 with an original musical play.

     (6)   Other legacy accomplishments include memorial and markers; USO style-big-band dances; veterans tributes and jamborees; national media campaign including publication of two books and hundreds of articles; guide maps of WWII sites and guided tours; annual Pearl Harbor commemorations; exhibits; cultural and educational events; and earning preservation achievement awards; and

Whereas, in order to preserve the City's rich heritage and vast contributions to World War II, it is vital that the City of Wilmington be designated as an "American World War II Heritage City"; Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

SECTION 1. The House of Representatives urges Congress to enact legislation directing a federal agency to designate at least one city in the United States each year as an "American World War II Heritage City" with Wilmington, North Carolina, as the first city to be so designated.

SECTION 2. The Principal Clerk shall transmit a copy of this resolution to each member of North Carolina's congressional delegation.

SECTION 3. This resolution is effective upon adoption.