

NAME OF AGENCY/CITY GOES HERE

RESOLUTION TEMPLATE:

RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL EFFORTS TO
EXONERATE THE PORT CHICAGO 50

WHEREAS, on July 17, 1944, the deadliest home front disaster of World War II took place when a tragic explosion occurred at the Port Chicago Naval Magazine killing 320 men (of whom 202 were African American) and wounding 390 (of whom 233 were African American); and

WHEREAS, Port Chicago Naval Magazine was racially segregated and all sailors loading munitions at the time of the explosion were African American; and

WHEREAS, The Navy commended some 200 surviving Black sailors for playing vital roles in rescue operations during the emergency, most notably in extinguishing fires near boxcars filled with explosives, effectively averting another massive explosion; and

WHEREAS, the surviving Black sailors were entitled to standard survivors' leave but were denied and ordered to clean up after the disaster; and

WHEREAS, Black sailors were exclusively ordered back to handling high explosives before an investigation could determine the cause of the deadly explosion; and

WHEREAS, 258 Black sailors engaged in a peaceful work stoppage rather than return under the same hazardous working conditions; and

WHEREAS, fifty of these men were unlawfully charged with mutiny, prosecuted as guilty and sentenced to prison; and

WHEREAS, three weeks after the work stoppage, a Naval Court of Inquiry report confirmed working conditions and practices enforced by Port Chicago leadership were in violation of Naval safety regulations and federal safety code; and

WHEREAS, the actions of the sailors, the public mutiny trial, and public advocacy from their champion Thurgood Marshall, initiated the desegregation of the Navy in February 1946; and

WHEREAS, starting in the 1990s, Congressman George Miller worked to preserve the history of the Port Chicago 50 and worked towards their exoneration, and in 1992, his legislation designated the site of the Port Chicago Naval Magazine as a national memorial, which is managed by the National Park Service; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, President Barack Obama signed legislation to incorporate Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial as a full and permanent unit of our National Park System; and

WHEREAS, the East Bay Regional Park District received part of the Concord Naval Weapons Station through a Public Benefit Conveyance on July 19, 2019, and has named the park Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50, which honors the courage and legacy of the Port Chicago 50, their champion Thurgood Marshall, and all those who sacrificed their lives in our nation’s ongoing struggle for social justice, racial equality, and workers’ rights; and

WHEREAS, Naval historians now recognize the actions of the Port Chicago 50 potentially saved lives and changed the Navy for the better; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, the State of California successfully passed SJR-15 urging the President of the United States and Congress to restore honor to the sailors unjustly blamed for, and the sailors convicted of mutiny following, the Port Chicago disaster, and to rectify any mistreatment by the military of those sailors, including the full exoneration of those who were convicted at court-martial; and

WHEREAS, in 2022 and 2023, fourteen East Bay Area cities, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, Contra Costa County Mayors Conference, and National NAACP passed resolutions supporting local, state, and federal efforts to exonerate the sailors wrongfully convicted of mutiny following the Port Chicago disaster of 1944; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, US Representative Mark DeSaulnier (CA-11), US Representative Barbara Lee (CA-12) and US Representative John Garamendi (CA-08) introduced a resolution recognizing the victims of the Port Chicago disaster and calling for the exoneration of the Port Chicago 50; and

WHEREAS, in August 2023, Vice President Kamala Harris praised the Port Chicago 50, writing that they “pushed for progress, and our Armed Forces are stronger today because they reflect the diversity of our country.”

NOW, THEREFORE, **NAME OF AGENCY/CITY GOES HERE** DOES RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. **NAME OF AGENCY/CITY GOES HERE** does hereby support these and all efforts to exonerate the Port Chicago 50 and recognize their service to our country.

Section 2. **NAME OF AGENCY/CITY GOES HERE** recognizes the efforts that this case presents in our nation’s struggle for social justice, racial equity, and workers’ rights.

Section 3. **NAME OF AGENCY/CITY GOES HERE** affirms support for all future efforts which urge the President, Congress of the United States, and Secretary of the Navy to take all necessary actions to restore honor to, and rectify the mistreatment by the United States Military of, any sailors who were unjustly blamed for and convicted of mutiny after the Port Chicago disaster, which occurred in the town of Port Chicago, California, in 1944.

Section 4. This resolution shall become effective immediately upon its passage and adoption.

Moved by **_____**, seconded by **_____**, and adopted this **## st** day of Month Goes Here, 2023 by the following vote:

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: