

1 [Commemorating the 71st Anniversary of the Port Chicago Disaster and Urging Restorative  
2 Justice to the U.S. Navy Sailors]

3 **Resolution commemorating the 71st Anniversary of the Port Chicago disaster and**  
4 **urging the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress to exonerate the 50**  
5 **sailors convicted of mutiny in the incident with the designation of Honorable**  
6 **Discharge.**

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8 WHEREAS, On July 17, 1944, The United States Navy experienced the worst  
9 ammunitions disaster and explosion in our Nation’s history, instantly destroying the Contra-  
10 Costa County California town of Port Chicago and killing 320 men, 202 of whom were African  
11 American enlisted men; and

12 WHEREAS, The five thousand tons of exploding munitions injured in excess of 400  
13 sailors as well, thereby representing more than 15 percent of all African American Naval  
14 casualties during World War II; and

15 WHEREAS, Of the 258 sailors who initially refused to resume unsafe loading of  
16 munitions some 208 would eventually yield to the Navy after threats with death by firing  
17 squad, however the 50 who would not acquiesce faced the largest mass mutiny trial in Naval  
18 history; and

19 WHEREAS, On October 24, 1944, at a Courts Martial trial at Treasure Island, in San  
20 Francisco, in a now widely recognized miscarriage of justice, all 50 men were found guilty of  
21 mutiny and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment; and

22 WHEREAS, The Port Chicago Mutiny trial (aka the Port Chicago 50) would ultimately  
23 serve as the catalyst for eventual desegregation of the US Navy and the Armed Services; and

24 WHEREAS, In 1994, the National Park Service dedicated the Port Chicago site as a  
25 National Memorial; and

1           WHEREAS, On April 19, 1999, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed  
2 Resolution No. 361-99, urging President William Clinton and the US Congress to exonerate  
3 the 50 sailors convicted of mutiny in the Port Chicago disaster. Subsequently a pardon was  
4 granted to one of the 50 sailors but none of the 50 were exonerated. Family members and  
5 activists are still working towards exoneration and

6           WHEREAS, In commemoration of African American Appreciation Month, the San  
7 Francisco Veterans Affairs Commission adjourned its February meeting with a moment of  
8 silence in respect and gratitude for the historic sacrifices of the brave young men of Port  
9 Chicago, many of whom, at an average of only 19 years of age, gave the ultimate sacrifice in  
10 the service of our Country, and

11           RESOLVED, As we approach the 71st Anniversary of the Port Chicago explosion, the  
12 San Francisco Board of Supervisors does hereby respectfully memorializes the Congress and  
13 our Commander-in-Chief, President Barack Obama to vacate the unjust convictions of these  
14 brave men, and to elevate their military records to show the appropriate designation of  
15 Honorable Discharge; and, be it

16           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
17 transmit copies of this resolution to the President and the Vice President of the United States,  
18 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each Senator and Representative from  
19 California in the Congress of the United States.

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