A Resolution honoring and commending Ronaqua Russell for her heroic achievements and extraordinary performance that resulted in her becoming the first African-American female aviator in the United States Coast Guard to receive the Air Medal.

PROPOSED BY: Senators Donna A. Frett-Gregory, Novelle E. Francis, Jr., Kenneth L. Gittens, Franklin D. Johnson and Janelle K. Sarauw

WHEREAS, Ronaqua Russell was born on June 5, 1990, in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands and is the daughter of Aquannette Y. Chinnery and Ronald E. Russell;

WHEREAS, Ronaqua is the granddaughter of Arthur L. Chinnery and Annette H. Chinnery and the great-granddaughter of Eulalie Rivera;

WHEREAS, Ronaqua grew up in the Smith Bay area of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands and started her formal education at Peace Corps Elementary School (now known as Yvonne Milliner Bowsky Elementary School) in Estate Mandahl;

WHEREAS, Ronaqua also attended Church of God Academy, All Saints Cathedral School, and the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School;

WHEREAS, Ronaqua enjoyed mathematics, history, and music;
WHEREAS, Ronaqua was involved in the Coast Guard’s Aviation Club, Marching Band and Pistol Team and ran indoor and outdoor track, specializing in sprinting events;

WHEREAS, Ronaqua was the co-president of the Genesis Diversity Council and participated in multiple diversity and inclusion groups at the Academy;

WHEREAS, during Ronaqua’s senior year at the Academy she applied for and received a coveted direct to flight school billet;

WHEREAS, Ronaqua graduated from the Coast Guard Academy in May 2012 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Operations Research and Computer Analysis and a commission as an Ensign in the United States Coast Guard;

WHEREAS, Ronaqua served as the Supervisory Officer for the Cadet Aviation Training Program in Mobile, Alabama during the two months prior to starting flight training;

WHEREAS, Ronaqua reported to naval flight school in August 2012 and completed a rigorous two-year training program, earning her Naval Aviator wings in September 2014;

WHEREAS, while Ronaqua was in flight school, she was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Junior Grade, and she then completed Coast Guard aviation training, becoming a HC-144A Ocean Sentry co-pilot, and reported to her first duty station at Sector/Air Station Corpus Christi, TX;

WHEREAS, during Ronaqua’s time in Corpus Christi she flew over 1,200 hours, in support of various Coast Guard missions, including search and rescue, law enforcement and logistics, and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant;

WHEREAS, in August 2017, Ronaqua’s unit was impacted by Hurricane Harvey and, as a result, she was part of the evacuation crew and later flew multiple missions in
SECTION 2. The President of the Legislature or the President’s designee shall prepare and present a perma plaque copy of this Resolution to Ronaqua Russel and the official Key to the territory at an appropriate ceremony.

BILL SUMMARY

This bill honors U. S. Coast Guard Lieutenant Ronaqua Russell for her outstanding service and dedication to her profession and heroic achievements.

BR21-0014/March 5, 2021 /ALM