

## **Draft Proclamation/Resolution**

### **Port Chicago Remembrance Day**

**WHEREAS**, the Port Chicago Naval Magazine, situated about [#] miles [DIRECTION] of [CITY], served as a major facility for supplying ammunition to the Pacific Theater during World War II; and

**WHEREAS**, enlisted African American Sailors were exclusively assigned to the hazardous job of loading high explosives onto cargo vessels; and

**WHEREAS**, on the night of July 17, 1944, two cargo ships being loaded with munitions at Port Chicago Naval Magazine exploded, resulting in the largest home front disaster of World War II, killing 320 people – most of them African Americans – injuring 390 military and civilian personnel, obliterating the naval base, and causing extensive damage to the town of Port Chicago, California; and

**WHEREAS**, following the disaster, hundreds of African American Sailors were assigned to resume the same hazardous duties without any safety reforms, prompting their protest and drawing national attention to the injustices of Jim Crow segregation and unsafe military labor practices; and

**WHEREAS**, fifty Sailors, known as the Port Chicago 50, were wrongfully charged and convicted of mutiny, sparking a national advocacy campaign endorsed by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and led by NAACP's Chief Counsel Thurgood Marshall which is now credited as the catalyst for the desegregation of the U.S. Navy; and

**WHEREAS**, the town of Port Chicago, California, was rebuilt following the deadly explosion, only for the federal government to seize and demolish all property in the town in order to establish a safety zone around the naval base, displacing thousands and effectively erasing the town of Port Chicago from existence; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 17, 2024, following decades of advocacy from local organizations and members of Congress—including Congressman George Miller, Congressman Mark DeSaulnier, Congressman Ron Dellums, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Congressman Pete Stark, and Congressman John Garamendi—the Port Chicago 50 and the remaining 208 Port Chicago Sailors who bravely stood in protest were fully exonerated by U.S. Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro, who stated, “The Port Chicago 50, and the hundreds who stood with them, may not be with us today, but their story lives on, a testament to the enduring power of courage and the unwavering pursuit of justice”; and

**WHEREAS**, with community partners such as the Port Chicago Alliance, and events like the Port Chicago Weekend, this history will continue to be recognized and honored to raise community awareness about the history at Port Chicago, California.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City of [CITY] hereby proclaims July 17th "Port Chicago Remembrance Day" to serve as an annual observance dedicated to honoring the individuals who lost their lives or were injured in the Port Chicago disaster, recognizing their selfless sacrifices for their country and the profound impact the disaster had both locally and nationally, including the pioneering civil rights protest of the Port Chicago Sailors, the unwavering courage and determination of the Port Chicago 50, the integration of the U.S. Navy, the destruction and eventual dissolution of the town of Port Chicago, California, and successful efforts to exonerate the Port Chicago Sailors.