

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Joint Resolution Designating April 13 as Borinqueneer’s Day

09/15/2022

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed a joint resolution (AJR147) designating April 13 as Borinqueneer’s Day in New Jersey. The signing marks the start of National Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs from September 15 to October 15, as the state honors the achievements, cultures, and contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans.

“The Borinqueneers played a vital role in our nation’s history, serving our country with bravery and distinction despite adversity,” said Governor Murphy. “While the sacrifice these soldiers made for our nation cannot be repaid, and the history of the challenges they endured cannot be undone, we will honor the legacies of these heroes by ensuring that their stories are never forgotten.”

Borinqueneer refers to members of the 65th Infantry Regiment, a unit comprised largely of Puerto Rican soldiers. Borinqueneer is derived from the indigenous, precolonial name for the island of Puerto Rico.

The 65th Infantry Regiment saw action in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. They were awarded 90 Purple Hearts in World War II and over 2,000 during the Korean War. Borinqueneers received many accolades for their service in Korea, including the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, and the Bronze Star. Additionally, the regiment was awarded the Presidential Unit Commendation, Meritorious Unit Commendation, and two Korean Presidential Unit Citations.

Primary sponsors of AJR147 include Senators Nellie Pou and Nilsa Cruz-Perez, and Assemblymembers Yvonne Lopez, Annette Chaparro, and Annette Quijano.

“As we kick off Latino Heritage Month, it is especially fitting to be reminded of the important contributions Puerto Ricans have made to our nation’s history,” said Senate Majority Leader Teresa Ruiz. “After years of unfair treatment, while they were serving in the armed forces, it is wonderful to see the Borinqueneers finally receive the recognition they deserve for their sacrifices and dedication to our country.”

“Minority communities have played a significant role in the military history of this country. The Borinqueneer regiment, comprised of Puerto Rican soldiers, displayed bravery and courage during a period when they faced grave social injustices and discrimination,” said Senator Cruz-Perez. “I am extremely grateful to my colleagues and the Governor for formally honoring the invaluable service of the Borinqueneer regiment.”

“The Borinqueneers served with distinction in World War I, World War II and the Korean War, but often were not treated with the respect they deserved,” said Senator Pou. “While we cannot undo the wrongs of the past, I am grateful we are giving these brave veterans the recognition they deserve for their many sacrifices and heroic acts.”

“Today is a momentous day for the members of the 65th Infantry Regiment, better known as the Borinqueneers, for their efforts are being memorialized in the designation of April 13 as Borinqueneers Day in New Jersey,” said Assemblywoman Lopez. “History does not remember every hero, with countless tales of sacrifice, bravery, and effort left behind in the pages of time. However, when we find the opportunity to praise our unsung heroes, we must seize it and shine a light on them. The story of the Borinqueneers is such a case, and with the signing of AJR147 here in New Jersey, we will never forget the Borinqueneers and continue honoring their immense contributions to this country for generations to come.”

“Designating April 13 as Borinqueneers Day is the perfect salute to the service and history of 65th Infantry Regiment,” said Assemblywomen Chaparro and Quijano. “With the signing of this bill, we find the Borinqueneers’ rightful place among the stories of the brave military men and women in New Jersey history and we honor the sacrifices they have made to protect democratic freedoms.”

“I am thrilled that in the State of New Jersey, April 13 will be known as Borinqueneer’s Day,” said Co-chair of the New Jersey Puerto Rico Commission Peggy Anastos. “The incredible bravery and service of the 65th Infantry Regiment deserves to be recognized in our nation’s history, and I am proud their legacy will be honored in our state. Thank you to the Legislature and Governor Murphy for their recognition of the Borinqueneers.”

“The Puerto Rican Association for Human Development, Inc. is happy and proud to see that the United States’ only all Latino unit, made up mostly of Puerto Ricans, is being honored by the State of New Jersey for its valor, bravery and significant place in history,” said Kim Ruiz, Executive Director and CEO of the Puerto Rico Association for Human Development. “We look forward to joining all New Jerseyans in celebrating Borinqueneer’s Day. Thank you, Governor Murphy!”

In April 2016, the regiment was awarded a Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of its achievements. As part of the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress designated April 13 as the day to honor the Borinqueneers’ service and “the sacrifices made and adversities overcome by Puerto Rican and Hispanic members of the armed forces.”

Governor Phil Murphy

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