



## H.R. 4544 – CODE TALKERS RECOGNITION ACT OF 2007

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### FLOOR SITUATION

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H.R. 4544 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Dan Boren (D-OK) on December 13, 2007. The bill was referred to the Committees on Financial Services and House Administration, but was not considered.

H.R. 4544 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on September 23, 2008.

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### SUMMARY

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Sense of Congress: The bill expresses that it is the sense of Congress that the service of Native American code talkers to the United States deserves recognition for dedication and value and that honoring Native American code talkers is long overdue.

Congressional Gold Medals: H.R. 4544 authorizes Congressional Gold Medals to be awarded in recognition of the service of Native American code talkers of each recognized tribe. If the tribe elects to send the medals to the Smithsonian Institution, the Smithsonian will accept them and maintain the list of the names of Native American code talkers of each recognized tribe.

Native American Code Talkers: The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the tribes, is required to determine the identity (to the maximum extent practicable) of each Native American code talker of each recognized tribe and determine whether any Indian tribe that is not a recognized tribe should be eligible to receive a gold medal under this Act.

Duplicate Medals: The Secretary is required to strike duplicate medals in silver to be awarded to a Native American that served in the Armed Forces as a code talker in any foreign conflict in which the United States was involved during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It also allows for bronze duplicate medals to be made for sale. The proceeds from the sale of the bronze medal would be deposited into the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

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### BACKGROUND

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During World War I, the Germans were listening to American radio communications and gaining valuable intelligence that led to heavy losses for the American troops. The commander of the U.S. Army's 142<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment overheard two Choctaws speaking their own language and made them radio communicators. They were able to substitute Choctaw words for military terms and speak in a code that the Germans were unable to understand.

After the success of Native American code talkers in WWI, the Army recruited Comanches, Choctaws, Kiowas, Winnebagos, Seminoles, Navajos, Hopis, and Cherokees to participate in the program. The Marine Corps took the continued work of the Army and made it into a security discipline by refining and codifying its use. The Marine Corps used the Navajo language exclusively and more than 400 Navajos were a part of the program throughout WWII. On July 26, 2001, the Congressional Gold Medal was awarded to the 29 original WWII Navajo Code Talkers.

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### COST

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The Congressional Budget Office has not issued a cost estimate for this legislation.

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### STAFF CONTACT

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For questions or further information contact Brianne Miller 6-2302.