A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED STATES MADE BY THE MEXICAN TWO-HUNDRED-FIRST SQUADRON DURING WORLD WAR II.

WHEREAS, the two-hundred-first squadron was formed by order of Mexican President Manuel Avila Camacho on July 10, 1944, after an agreement was reached with United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt; and

WHEREAS, this all-volunteer contingent of three hundred fifty Mexican fighter pilots and ground personnel was affectionately known as "the white noses" by United States army ground fighting forces, but they called themselves the "Aztec eagles"; and

WHEREAS, the two-hundred-first squadron, officially attached to the fifty-eighth fighter group of the United States army air forces, served courageously in the liberation of the Philippines during World War II; and

WHEREAS, the pilots received special training in air and combat tactics that included fighter formation, low-altitude gunnery and night flying; and

WHEREAS, the Aztec eagles and their families traveled thousands of miles for training, facing discrimination and hostile treatment in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the squadron left for the Philippines by ship

on March 27, 1945, traveling mostly at night and taking many evasive precautions during the day because of the Axis' submarine threats off the coast of California, and arrived in the Philippines thirty days later; and

WHEREAS, these Mexican pilots flew Republic P-47D-30-RA thunderbolt single-seat fighter aircraft and carried out two thousand hours of combat flying; and

WHEREAS, the fighter planes had double insignias, one for Mexico and one for the United States; and

WHEREAS, upon arrival, the men of the two-hundred-first squadron were looked upon with disdain and distrust by the American men of the fifty-eighth fighter group; and

WHEREAS, those sentiments soon ended as American pilots recognized the bravery and ferocity of the Aztec eagles when the men of the two-hundred-first squadron executed dangerous dive-bomb runs from high altitudes; and

WHEREAS, these bold pilots faced such grueling missions that they often needed to be pried out of their cockpits and helped off the tarmac; and

WHEREAS, the two-hundred-first squadron remained side by side with American troops through the end of World War II; and

WHEREAS, on November 18, 1945, the men returned to Mexico City and were welcomed back with the joyous cheers of the city's residents; and

WHEREAS, the two-hundred-first squadron remains the only military unit in Mexico's history to engage in combat outside of its national borders; and

WHEREAS, despite losing seven pilots, the service of the Aztec eagles helped improve relations between the United States and Mexico; and

WHEREAS, a tremendous debt of gratitude is owed by residents of the United States to this squadron of Mexican men who bravely fought for the United States during World War II against the Japanese;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the Mexican two-hundred-first squadron be recognized and honored for its contributions fighting for the United States during World War II; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico congressional delegation be encouraged to appeal to the administration of President Joe Biden to honor the contributions of the Mexican two-hundred-first squadron nationally; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the board chair of the New Mexico military museum foundation, the secretary of cultural affairs, the New Mexico congressional delegation and the consul of the consulate of Mexico in Albuquerque.