



Office of Representative Heath Shuler

Representing North Carolina's Eleventh Congressional District

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House Votes to Rename Asheville VA Medical Center After Pfc. Charles George

Washington, D.C. – The House of Representatives today voted unanimously to rename the Asheville VA Medical Center in honor of Pfc. Charles George, a native of Western North Carolina who was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest honor our nation bestows, for his actions during the Korean War. Representative Heath Shuler had introduced H.R. 2546 shortly before Memorial Day.

Pfc. George was a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and was raised in the Birdtown community of the Qualla Boundary. He attended Cherokee Schools before enlisting in the U.S. Army and being sent to fight in the Korean War. On November 30th, 1952, while fighting in Korea, Pfc. George was killed in action. He died saving the lives of those around him.

According to the citation that accompanied his Congressional Medal of Honor, "Pfc. George shouted a warning to one comrade, pushed (another) soldier out of danger, and, with full knowledge of the consequences, unhesitatingly threw himself upon the grenade, absorbing the full blast of the explosion."

After the bill passed Representative Heath Shuler said, "I am extremely proud that the House of Representatives has with joined me in honoring the life and sacrifice of Pfc. George. Renaming the Asheville VA Medical Center in his honor will ensure that generations to come will remember his courage and valor."

Principal Chief Michell Hicks was pleased with the bill's successful passage. He said, "This is a proud day for all of Western North Carolina, especially the Eastern Band of Cherokee. I am very thankful for the work Congressman Shuler has done and continues to do for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians."

Charles Smith, Director of the North Carolina Division of Veteran's Affairs, was also enthusiastic about the bill's passage. "North Carolina has a rich military history, and it is extremely appropriate that the VA center be named after Pfc. George. He is a true hero, as are all Medal of Honor recipients. He is great hero for the Eastern Band of Cherokee and all North Carolinians. We have been working on this renaming for years, and it is great that Congressman Shuler got this done in such a short amount of time."

H.R. 2546 enjoys the full support of the North Carolina Congressional delegation – Democrats and Republicans – as well as the support of veteran's organizations including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans, the North Carolina Veteran's Affairs Commission, and the Order of the Purple Heart.

It will now move on to the U.S. Senate for consideration.

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