

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1010

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Recognizing and honoring William Mervin "Billy" Mills, also known as Tamakoce Tek'hila, for his unselfish and loyal contributions to the State of South Dakota and to his country.

WHEREAS, Billy Mills was born June 30, 1938, in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, where he was raised on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation for the Oglala Sioux Tribe, and Billy Mills turned to running at a young age after being orphaned at the age of twelve; and

WHEREAS, after being orphaned, he was sent to the Haskell Indian School in Lawrence, Kansas, and went on to run track at the University of Kansas in the late 1950s on a full athletic scholarship, becoming a three-time NCAA All-America cross-country runner. The University of Kansas track team won the 1959 and 1960 outdoor national championships. Billy Mills eventually went on to graduate with a B.S. in Physical Education; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from the University of Kansas, Billy Mills was commissioned as an officer in the United States Marine Corps where he served and led our nation's finest as a Marine First Lieutenant. While stationed at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in California, First Lieutenant Mills ran up to 100 miles a week, eventually winning the inter-service 10,000-meter race in Germany, while continuing to lead from the front as a Marine officer. First Lieutenant Mills recorded a time of 30.08 in the 10,000 meters, with a time of 4:08 in the mile; and

WHEREAS, Billy Mills remained undaunted after not qualifying for the 1960 Olympics and went to the Olympic Trials in 1964, where he finished second with a time almost a minute slower than other qualifiers. Even though he made the Olympic team, he was viewed as an underdog; and

WHEREAS, Billy Mills later went to Tokyo, Japan, to compete in the 10,000 meters. Until that point, no American had ever won the 10,000-meter race in the Olympics. Even though he was written out before the race, Billy Mills went on to outlast Australia's Ron Clarke and Tunisian Mohamed Gammoudi. Billy Mills took the lead within the last 300 yards, pushing past Gammoudi and securing the win by a three-yard separation. He finished with a time of 28:24.4, a new Olympic record, 46 seconds better than his previous best time; and

WHEREAS, after his successful debut in the Olympics, Billy Mills continued to show his

passion for running. He went on to set a world record in the six-mile run in 1965 as well as three additional American track records. During this time, he continued to serve our country as a Marine. He went on to work for the Department of the Interior; and

WHEREAS, he later went on to be the national spokesman of Running Strong for American Indian Youth, a non-profit organization that aims to help American Indian people meet their immediate survival needs of food, water, and shelter, while implementing and supporting programs designed to create opportunities for self-sufficiency and self-esteem. Through Running Strong, Billy Mills visits American Indian communities throughout the United States and speaks to youth about healthy lifestyles and taking pride in their heritage; and

WHEREAS, throughout his lifetime, Billy Mills has received many honors for his contributions to his sport, Native American people, and his country. In 1984, he was inducted into the United States Olympic Hall of Fame. In 2013, he was awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal from President Barack Obama for his work with the Running Strong for American Indian Youth Organization. In 2014, he was awarded the NCAA's highest honor, the Theodore Roosevelt Award. His story went on to be depicted in the 1983 movie, Running Brave:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Ninety-Third Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that the South Dakota Legislature does hereby commend and honor the accomplishments and patriotism of Billy Mills. For his contributions to not only the state, but the entirety of the United States of America, as Billy Mills himself has said, "Every passion has its destiny."

Adopted by the House of Representatives,
Concurred in by the Senate,

February 20, 2018
February 22, 2018

G. Mark Mickelson
Speaker of the House

Sandra J. Zinter
Chief Clerk of the House

Matt Michels
President of the Senate

Kay Johnson
Secretary of the Senate