

Native American veterans celebrate congressional charter for National American Indian Veterans

See YouTube video: [Native American veterans celebrate congressional charter for National American Indian Veterans \(dakotane.wsnow.com\)](#)

By [Parker Brown](#)

Published: Dec. 14, 2023 at 11:03 PM CST

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (Dakota News Now) - The [Military Order of the Purple Heart](#)'s chapter 5355 in Sioux Falls held its regular monthly meeting Thursday at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance. This meeting was a special one with plenty to celebrate. The chapter received a generous donation of popcorn from the [BSA Sioux Council](#) and a presentation of the Military Order of the Purple Heart's regional Patriot of the Year Award to [David Flute](#), Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Tribal Relations. The cherry on top was the news from earlier in the day.

Until now, there has never been a congressional charter designated for Native American veterans despite many attempts. In May, Representative Dusty Johnson and Senator Mike Rounds made another attempt to establish one with the [National American Indian Veterans Charter Bill](#). However, it was the [2024 National Defense Authorization Act](#) that finally led to the establishment of a congressional charter for the already operating National American Indian Veterans organization, or NAIV.

According to the U.S. Department of Defense, Native Americans serve in the armed forces at a rate [five times higher](#) than the national average. While other nationalities and religious groups currently have a recognized charter, veterans said that it's long overdue for a Native American congressional charter.

Their contributions to the military have not gone unnoticed. One of Senator Rounds' motivations to get a congressional charter established was the work of a Korean War veteran and member of the Hunkpati Sioux Tribe, [Don Loudner](#). Loudner served with Rounds' father and has been pushing for this representation for years.

Finally seeing collective support and recognition has meant a lot to the community of Native American veterans.

The Act will become official with the signature of President Biden. The bill is likely to be signed in January. Senator Rounds authored 33 provisions in the act, including the provision that established the charter.

