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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 88

45TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2002

INTRODUCED BY

John Pinto

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO SUPPORT  
LEGISLATION AMENDING 38 U.S.C. 2408 TO INCLUDE TRIBAL  
GOVERNMENTS IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS FROM THE FEDERAL  
STATE CEMETERY GRANTS PROGRAM TO ENABLE A NATIVE AMERICAN  
VETERANS' NATIONAL CEMETERY WITHIN THE FOUR SACRED MOUNTAINS  
OF THE NAVAJO NATION.

WHEREAS, the federal state cemetery grants program has  
obligated over fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000) in grants  
to establish, expand or improve more than forty state  
veterans' cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, the only veterans' cemetery on the Navajo Nation  
is located in Fort Defiance, Arizona, and it is filled to  
capacity with veterans from the Navajo Nation; and

WHEREAS, sixteen thousand Navajo people have served as

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1 veterans since the treaty of 1868 was signed; and

2 WHEREAS, the average age of Navajo Nation World War II  
3 veterans is seventy-five years, and over fifty veterans die  
4 each year; and

5 WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation has three potential locations  
6 for cemeteries, each one covering more than forty acres, and  
7 none is far from available services; and

8 WHEREAS, because so many Navajo people have served the  
9 United States bravely and with dignity, it is necessary that  
10 an appropriate final resting place be available for them near  
11 their families;

12 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
13 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico congressional  
14 delegation be requested to support legislation expanding 38  
15 U.S.C. 2408 to include tribal governments in the distribution  
16 of grants from the federal state cemetery grants program so  
17 that a Native American veterans' national cemetery can be  
18 established within the four sacred mountains of the Navajo  
19 Nation, allowing both Native American and non-native veterans  
20 to be buried near their homes in the Gallup, Grants,  
21 Farmington, Shiprock and Window Rock areas; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
23 transmitted to the New Mexico congressional delegation, the  
24 director of the department of Navajo veterans affairs, the  
25 secretary of the United States department of veterans affairs

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and the state director of veterans' affairs.