

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 veterans since the treaty of 1868 was signed; and

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

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

WHEREAS, because so many Navajo people have served the United States bravely and with dignity, it is necessary that

an appropriate final resting place be available for them near their families;

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the New Mexico congressional delegation, the director of the department of Navajo veterans affairs, the secretary of the United States department of veterans affairs and the state director of veterans' affairs. _____