

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE VETERANS' SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO DEVELOP A
3 DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN OUTLINING VETERANS' ISSUES IN
4 NEW MEXICO.

5
6 WHEREAS, there are over one hundred seventy thousand
7 veterans who are residents of the state of New Mexico; and

8 WHEREAS, a significant number of New Mexico veterans
9 have come home and will continue to return due to the
10 drawdown of forces from Iraq and Afghanistan; and

11 WHEREAS, a research project conducted by the army war
12 college and published in 2012 states that during drawdowns,
13 the nation historically reduces defense spending to about
14 three hundred seventy-five billion dollars
15 (\$375,000,000,000), in real terms, and that currently the
16 nation is expending six hundred forty-six billion dollars
17 (\$646,000,000,000) for defense, including war-related
18 funding, on top of the five-hundred-thirty-one-billion-dollar
19 (\$531,000,000,000) base defense budget; and

20 WHEREAS, with decreasing operations in Afghanistan, the
21 nation's challenging fiscal and economic situations will
22 demand significant reductions in the base defense budget,
23 estimating that if the nation follows historical patterns
24 during the global war on terror drawdown, it may reduce the
25 base defense budget by about twenty-four percent over the

1 next ten years, approximately one trillion four hundred
2 billion dollars (\$1,400,000,000,000), which is more
3 reductions than sequestration requires in the federal Budget
4 Control Act of 2011; and

5 WHEREAS, under such a drawdown scenario, the United
6 States department of defense would have to consider a
7 reduction of five hundred thousand active duty service
8 members, particularly given the increased costs of manpower,
9 which have grown sixty-three percent since the nation
10 implemented the all-volunteer force; and

11 WHEREAS, a significant number of the five hundred
12 thousand service members that may be part of the drawdown
13 reduction will come home to New Mexico, and the reduction in
14 federal defense spending could have a significant impact on
15 the benefits and services available to veterans; and

16 WHEREAS, veterans face a number of unique issues and
17 suffer many physical and mental health injuries due to the
18 service they have provided to this country, including
19 traumatic brain injury, the signature injury of the current
20 global war on terror, and posttraumatic stress disorder,
21 which is being diagnosed in record numbers; and

22 WHEREAS, the veterans' services department should work
23 in conjunction with the United States department of veterans
24 affairs and department of defense to determine the best
25 strategies that will ensure that the veterans who have come

1 home, and those that will soon be home, are taken care of in
2 a manner in which they deserve and in gratitude for their
3 service and their sacrifice; and

4 WHEREAS, it is important to develop a strategic plan
5 that will address issues facing New Mexico veterans who have
6 bravely served this country and help to prepare the state to
7 meet veterans' needs now and in the future;

8 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
9 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the veterans' services department,
10 in conjunction with the United States department of veterans
11 affairs and department of defense, develop a draft strategic
12 plan that:

13 A. outlines what the department and experts on
14 veterans' issues nationwide see as growing issues for
15 veterans; and

16 B. reviews the state's capability to work with and
17 use current United States department of veterans affairs
18 policies and grant programs to meet the diverse needs of
19 New Mexico veterans; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the draft strategic plan
21 include an assessment of:

22 A. adequate cemetery space for veterans, including
23 the need in future decades for veteran burials based on
24 current United States department of veterans affairs
25 proximity criteria for appropriate veteran cemeteries;

1 B. veteran homes and facilities, including a
2 projection for long-term care due to issues such as traumatic
3 brain injury;

4 C. the current and projected number of veterans
5 who require various levels of care, including those with a
6 need for treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder;

7 D. access and obstacles to facilities that provide
8 treatment for veterans, particularly to veterans that reside
9 in rural areas of the state; and

10 E. the economic impact of retiree, pension and
11 non-pension veterans on the state; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the veterans' services
13 department report the draft strategic plan to the New Mexico
14 legislative council and the interim military and veterans'
15 affairs committee by November 1, 2013; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
17 transmitted to the speaker of the house of representatives,
18 the president pro tempore of the senate and the secretary of
19 veterans' services.

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