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A MEMORIAL

SUPPORTING A TRANSFER OF REAL PROPERTY FROM THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS TO THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE FOR THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL MONUMENT DEVOTED TO FORT WINGATE, ITS HISTORY AND ITS LONG-REACHING IMPACT.

WHEREAS, Fort Wingate has played a central role in the history of the southwest United States and its people, particularly in the areas of military, education and economic development; and

WHEREAS, in 1872 at Fort Wingate, Chief Manuelito, Thomas V. Kearn and General Otis Howard established the Navajo cavalry, composed of one hundred volunteers, thereby becoming the first Indian police force; and

WHEREAS, Fort Wingate served as the headquarters for Navajo Indian scouts from 1873 to 1890; and

WHEREAS, of the many Navajos who served in the United States military in the 1880s and 1890s, two women, Mexicana Chiquita and Muchucha, became the first women to serve in combat roles in the United States army; and

WHEREAS, Fort Wingate became a center for education and research activities in the late nineteenth century; and

WHEREAS, innovators in the fields of anthropology, archaeology, geology and botany used Fort Wingate as their headquarters; and

1           WHEREAS, at Fort Wingate vocational high school, in May  
2 1942, the first Navajo code talkers were recruited and sworn  
3 into the United States marine corps; and

4           WHEREAS, in 1926, the Charles H. Burke vocational school  
5 was established and, after numerous name changes and  
6 relocations, became Wingate high school in 1965, with its  
7 original location becoming Wingate elementary school; and

8           WHEREAS, the education provided to Navajo students of  
9 Wingate high school and Wingate elementary school became the  
10 foundation for gainful employment for many Navajo people; and

11           WHEREAS, the vocational programs at the high school  
12 provided training in skills related to traditional Navajo  
13 life; and

14           WHEREAS, Fort Wingate provided employment to many Navajo  
15 people, from workers who constructed the fort in the 1800s to  
16 those who worked and currently work at the schools and  
17 offices; and

18           WHEREAS, the approximately four hundred ninety-five  
19 acres of real property proposed to be considered for the old  
20 Fort Wingate national monument is under the exclusive  
21 jurisdiction of the United States department of the  
22 interior's bureau of Indian affairs; and

23           WHEREAS, with the planned demolition of several  
24 buildings on the site, and with it the destruction of  
25 tangible Navajo historical artifacts, a transfer in the near

1 future is of critical importance;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
3 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New  
4 Mexico congressional delegation be requested to support all  
5 efforts to transfer the real property consisting of the four-  
6 hundred-ninety-five-acre schools site from the federal bureau  
7 of Indian affairs to the national park service for the  
8 creation of a national monument devoted to Fort Wingate, its  
9 history and its long-reaching impact; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
11 transmitted to the members of the New Mexico congressional  
12 delegation, the bureau of Indian affairs, the secretary of the  
13 interior, the national park service, the McKinley county board  
14 of commissioners, the speaker of the twenty-third Navajo  
15 Nation council and the president of the Navajo Nation.           

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