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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 44

50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2011

INTRODUCED BY

Zachary J. Cook and Rod Adair

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO DETERMINE APPROPRIATE PROCEDURES TO ACCOMMODATE THE BURIAL OF ALL VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE FAMILY MEMBERS AT THE FORT STANTON CEMETERY.

WHEREAS, on November 10, 2010, the board of regents of the university of New Mexico voted to close the Fort Stanton cemetery to future burials of all but deceased merchant marines, spouses of merchant marines or individuals associated with the Fort Stanton hospital prior to its closure in 1954; and

WHEREAS, this decision effectively precludes interment in the cemetery of honorably discharged veterans and their eligible family members; and

WHEREAS, this decision closes the Fort Stanton cemetery to

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1 dependents and veterans who have a spouse already interred in
2 the cemetery and who have a burial plot reserved for future use
3 by the living spouse or veteran; and

4 WHEREAS, out of respect for those veterans already buried
5 at the Fort Stanton cemetery and in consideration of the
6 growing shortage of burial sites for veterans in the state and
7 nation, volunteers who maintain the cemetery have coordinated
8 the burial of veterans and eligible family members with several
9 state agencies for the past several years, with very little
10 cost to the state; and

11 WHEREAS, the Fort Stanton cemetery has been under the
12 authority of a number of state agencies, including the
13 corrections department and the veterans' services department,
14 since the federal government deeded the property to the state
15 in 1953; and

16 WHEREAS, the cemetery is included in the national register
17 of historic places; and

18 WHEREAS, the cemetery is currently the responsibility of
19 the state monuments division of the cultural affairs
20 department;

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
22 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the cultural affairs department be
23 requested to conduct a study to determine appropriate
24 procedures to accommodate the burial of all veterans and
25 eligible family members at the Fort Stanton cemetery; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the cultural affairs
2 department consult with the veterans' services department to
3 identify and consider the special needs and desires regarding
4 burial of veterans in New Mexico; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study explore the
6 potential for federally assisted expansion of the Fort Stanton
7 cemetery to accommodate burial of populations other than
8 merchant marines, family members of merchant marines and
9 individuals associated with the Fort Stanton hospital prior to
10 its closure in 1954; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
12 transmitted to the secretary of cultural affairs and the
13 secretary of veterans' services.