

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THAT THREE AGENCIES COOPERATE TO STUDY THE
3 FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A NEW MEXICO VETERANS COURT.

4
5 WHEREAS, New Mexico is home to more than one hundred
6 eighty thousand veterans, some ten thousand of them Native
7 Americans, according to the veterans' services department;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, most of those veterans have served during
10 wartime, including almost forty thousand who served in Iraq
11 or Afghanistan; and

12 WHEREAS, military veterans in New Mexico have an
13 estimated economic impact of more than one billion dollars
14 (\$1,000,000,000), according to the veterans' services
15 department; and

16 WHEREAS, post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain
17 injury from wartime engagement, substance abuse and
18 psychological problems may be more common among combat
19 veterans upon their return home; and

20 WHEREAS, these problems may cause a formerly law-abiding
21 veteran to commit infractions of the law; and

22 WHEREAS, some states and local communities have started
23 veterans courts to divert veterans who commit crimes into
24 programs directed at recovery from addictions, mental
25 illness, post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, many of the veterans courts result from
3 concerns that the numbers of returning soldiers will only
4 increase for some years to come; and

5 WHEREAS, a significant number of veterans courts involve
6 job-placement services and psychological counseling as part
7 of their jail-diversion programming; and

8 WHEREAS, the states and local communities with veterans
9 courts have predicted that significant savings will result
10 from diverting veterans from expensive incarceration to
11 socially productive programs that will aid society as they
12 aid veterans;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
14 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the administrative office of the
15 courts, the veterans' services department and the department
16 of military affairs commence a joint study of the feasibility
17 of establishing a New Mexico veterans court, including an
18 analysis of projected caseloads and costs for the purpose of
19 providing just and constructive interventions for United
20 States combat veterans alleged to have broken the law when
21 the alleged infraction is possibly related to traumatic brain
22 injury or behavioral health issues; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the three agencies write a
24 report and present it to the appropriate interim legislative
25 committee by October 1, 2009; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the director of the administrative office of the courts, the secretary of veterans' services and the adjutant general of New Mexico.
