

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE VETERANS' SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO INVESTIGATE THE FEASIBILITY OF LOCATING IN SANTA FE A VETERANS MEMORIAL HONORING NEW MEXICO'S NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has the second largest Native American population in the country, trailing only Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, Native Americans have played a significant role in the military history of our nation; and

WHEREAS, the United States department of veterans affairs estimates that there are more than nine thousand Native American veterans living in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, ever since World War I was declared, shortly after New Mexico gained statehood, our state's Native Americans have had the highest per capita rate of military service of any ethnic group in the country; and

WHEREAS, World War II historians credit the Navajo code talkers with devising a communication code, based on their Navajo language, that was undecipherable to the Japanese military and, thus, helped allied forces turn the tide in the Pacific theater and bring an end to the biggest global war in the history of civilization; and

WHEREAS, during the Korean conflict and the Vietnam conflict, Native Americans once again had the highest per

capita rate of military service of any ethnic population in the nation, serving in combat roles in disproportionately large numbers, which put them at increased risk compared to any other ethnic group; and

WHEREAS, high percentages of Native American men and women continue to serve in the military, recently in the global war on terror in Iraq and currently in Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, these Native Americans are strong exemplars of the "Warrior Spirit" inherent in Native American culture, a spirit that Native American veterans have historically drawn upon to give them strength, honor, pride, devotion and wisdom, just as their ancestors did when defending their native land during our nation's colonial expansion; and

WHEREAS, currently, nothing exists in Santa Fe, New Mexico's capital and the political, historical and tourism hub of the state, to honor these brave warriors who not only proudly represented their tribal nations, but patriotically served the United States of America by answering calls to arms against the enemies that have threatened the freedoms of all Americans;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the veterans' services department be requested to investigate the feasibility of locating in Santa Fe a veterans memorial honoring New Mexico's Native American veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of veterans' services.