

planning and leading a service project for their community. This is not an honor given out lightly: this young man is becoming an Eagle Scout because he is intelligent, dedicated, and principled.

I am proud to call Nicholas George Richardson my constituent, for he is a shining example of the promise of the next generation. Indeed, he represents the best of the young people in our country. I extend my sincere congratulations to him and his family, on this momentous occasion.

CONGRATULATING THE 2004 FLORIDA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION CLASS 1A STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2005

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the 2004 Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) Class 1A State Football Champion Fort Meade Middle-High School Fighting Miners from the 12th Congressional District of Florida.

This was an incredible season for the Fighting Miners as they finally became the best football program in Class 1A and one of the elite teams in Florida under Head Coach Michael Hayde.

I commend the champion Fort Meade Middle-High School football team for a wonderful and magical run this year. The people of Florida and all of Polk County are proud of you. You have all demonstrated that hard work, perseverance and unity are the foundation of success.

I applaud the entire Fort Meade football coaching staff for their commitment and dedication to their players and for proving that hard work, sportsmanship and determination pay off.

I pay tribute to Fort Meade Middle-High School students, teachers, coaches and the entire football team on their achievement as victors of the Class 1A state championship football game.

NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS BURIAL FAIRNESS ACT OF 2005

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2005

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Native American Veterans Cemetery Act of 2005. I first introduced this bill in the 108th Congress, and I am optimistic about its prospects during the 109th Congress.

The Native American Veterans Cemetery Act makes all Native American tribes eligible to apply for state cemetery grants. Under current law, only states are eligible for these grants. The bill would not give preference or special exceptions to Native American tribes that apply for the state cemetery grants. It would simply put tribes on equal footing with state governments—consistent with tribal sovereignty—by allowing them to apply for grants

to establish, expand or improve tribal veterans cemeteries. Moreover, if a Native American tribe were awarded a state cemetery grant, the cemetery would be open to all veterans.

Historically, Native Americans have the highest record of service per capita of any ethnic group. New Mexico is home to almost 9,800 Native American Veterans, making it one of the top five states in the country with regard to its Native American veteran population. I believe it is time that Native American veterans who have served our country so honorably are allowed to pursue a decent, dignified resting place on their tribal lands.

Last year, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi stated in writing that he strongly supported this bill's enactment, and because it does not extend any special exceptions or benefits to Native American tribes that apply for state cemetery grants, this bill is budget neutral. The bill is also supported by the Navajo Nation, the largest federally recognized tribe, as well as National American Indian Veterans, Inc (NAIV). In addition to a resolution adopted by the Navajo Nation Council, the New Mexico and Arizona state legislatures have both passed memorials urging Congress to adopt this measure. I have included with this statement support letters from the VA, Navajo Nation, and NAIV.

I would like to thank my colleague Representative TOM COLE of Oklahoma for his strong and early support of this bill, as well as the other 24 original cosponsors. I look forward to working with all of my colleagues to move this bill during the 109th Congress.

THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS,
Washington, July 29, 2004.

Hon. TOM UDALL,
Member, Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. UDALL: We are pleased to present our views on H.R. 2983, 108th Congress, a bill, "[t]o amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for eligibility of Indian tribal organizations for grants for the establishment of veterans cemeteries on trust lands." This bill would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make grants to tribal organizations to assist them in establishing, expanding, or improving veterans' cemeteries in the same manner and under the same conditions as grants to states are made under 38 U.S.C. 2408.

The cemetery-grants program has proven to be an effective way of making the option of veterans-cemetery burials available in locations not conveniently served by our national cemeteries. H.R. 2983 would create another means of accommodating the burial needs of Native American veterans who wish to be buried in tribal lands, and we strongly support its enactment.

While we are unsure of the number of grant applications that may be prompted by the bill's enactment, we do not assume its passage would result in the appropriation of additional funds for the cemetery-grants program. Hence, we estimate its enactment would be budget neutral.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised that there is no objection to the submission of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely yours,

ANTHONY J. PRINCIPI.

NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN VETERANS, INC.,

Mitchell, SD, October 7, 2004.

DEAR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE: The National American Indian Veterans, Inc. is writing to respectfully request your sup-

port of H.R. 2983, the Native American Veterans Cemetery Act of 2003 (Act). The Act will authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make grants available to tribal organizations for establishing, expanding, or improving Veterans cemeteries on trust land owned by, or held in trust for tribal organizations. The Act has been referred to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Veterans Affairs, Sub-Committee on Benefits.

Today, American Indian Veterans cemeteries in Indian Country are either non-existent or are filled to capacity. As a result, our deceased brothers and sisters in arms are either laid to rest in State Veterans Cemeteries far from their homelands and families, or in cemeteries without the identifying honor of distinguished service in defense of our great nation.

During his second inaugural address, President Abraham Lincoln spoke to the mission of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to "care for him who shall have borne the battle and his widow and orphan." On a population per capita basis, no one has borne the battle more than the American Indian Veteran and their widows and orphans. American Indian Veterans have served in the defense of the United States in all its military conflicts throughout the 20th and 21st Century.

Your support of H.R. 2983, the Native American Veterans Cemetery Act of 2003, will honor American Indian Veterans by establishing Veterans Cemeteries in Indian Country.

DONALD E. LOUDNER,
National Commander.
ANDERSON MORGAN,
Junior Vice Chairman.
CASSANDRA MORGAN,
Treasurer.
MICHAEL PAVATEA,
Senior Vice Commander.
JOEY STRICKLAND,
Chief of Staff.
BRYCE IN THE WOODS,
Secretary.

RESOLUTION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

APPROVING AND SUPPORTING THE NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS CEMETERY ACT OF 2003 (H.R. 2983) INTRODUCED BY U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TOM UDALL OF NEW MEXICO THAT THE BILL WILL MAKE ALL TRIBES ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR STATE CEMETERY GRANTS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

Whereas:

1. Pursuant to 2 N.N.C. §§821 and 824(B)(5), the Intergovernmental Relations Committee is hereby established as a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council and is to coordinate with all committees, chapters, branches and entities concerned with all Navajo appearances and testimony before Congressional committees, departments of the United States government, state legislatures and departments and county and local governments; and

2. Pursuant to 2 N.N.C. §§601 and 604(B)(1), (3) and (5), the Human Services Committee is established and continued as a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council, and is empowered to promulgate regulations for the enforcement and implementation of the labor laws and policies of the Navajo Nation and laws relating to veterans services; to recommend legislation regarding employment, training, and veterans services; and to serve as the oversight authority for the Division of Human Resources, including the Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs (DNVA); and

3. The DNVA under the Division of Human Resources was established to foster the interests of Navajo veterans by advocating and providing administration oversight and coordination of veterans programs and services of federal, state and tribal governments and private agencies; and

4. Pursuant to Resolution GSCMY-40-03 of the Government Services Committee of the Navajo Nation Council, one of the purposes of the DNVA under the Division of Human Resources is to seek out and identify additional funding sources and make recommendations for the implementation, expansion and improvement of existing programs of the divisions and offices of the Navajo Nation to ensure that Navajo veterans receive the benefits and services they are entitled to; and

5. Although the federal State Cemetery Grants Program (SCGP) exists pursuant to 38 U.S.C. Section 2408 since 1978 for the benefit of all U.S. Armed Forces service members and veterans, Indian Tribes of the U.S. are ineligible to apply for program funding to establish, expand or improve a veterans cemetery on their reservations because eligibility requirements are limited to states only; and

6. The states of Arizona and New Mexico have passed legislations in support of an amendment to the law to allow Indian tribes' participation in the SCGP with funding to establish, expand or improve cemeteries on the reservation. The DNVA is planning to establish a new veterans cemetery to replace the old and full to capacity Ft. Defiance Veterans Cemetery within the four sacred mountains of the Navajo Nation to afford burial of Native American and non-native veterans and their eligible spouses and dependent children; and

7. By Resolution HSCN-39-03, the Human Services Committee of the Navajo Nation Council recommended the Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Navajo Nation Council to approve and support the Native American Veterans Cemetery Act of 2003 (H.R. 2983) introduced by U.S. Representative Tom Udall of New Mexico, that the bill will make all tribes eligible to apply for State Cemetery Grants from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

8. By Resolution CJ-5-40, the Navajo Nation Council resolved that the Navajo People stood ready to aid and defend the United States Government and its institutions against all subversive and armed conflicts and pledged loyalty to the system which recognized minority rights and a way of life; and

9. Navajo veterans, since their return from various wars, continue to live in substandard and unsanitary living conditions and continue to face many problems from unemployment to health problems, mentally and physically, and as Native American veterans they have borne the scars of many battles at a proportionally higher cost than any other ethnic group; and

10. It is in the best interest of all Navajo veterans, and their spouses and dependent children, the need and benefit for final resting place be established within the four sacred mountains of the Navajo Nation.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved That:

1. The Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Navajo Nation Council hereby approves and supports the Native American Veterans Cemetery Act of 2003 (H.R. 2983), attached hereto as Exhibit "A", introduced by U.S. Representative Tom Udall of New Mexico, that the bill make all tribes eligible to apply for State Cemetery Grants from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

2. The Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Navajo Nation Council requests the assistance of the Navajo Nation Washington Office in the tracking of the legisla-

tion and notify appropriate Navajo Nation committees regarding committee hearings on this legislation.

3. The Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Navajo Nation Council further recommends that the Office of the President/Vice President of the Navajo Nation and the full Navajo Nation Council support and authorize this effort and initiative on behalf of the Navajo Nation veterans.

4. The Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Navajo Nation Council furthermore urges all Indian nations of states to effect the purpose of the Act beneficial at most for Native American service members and veterans and their spouses and dependent children.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly considered by the Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Navajo Nation Council at a duly called meeting at Window Rock, Navajo Nation (Arizona), at which a quorum was present and that same was passed by a vote of 8 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstained, this 17th day of November, 2003.

LAWRENCE T. MORGAN,
*Chairperson, Intergovernmental
Relations Committee.*

RESOLUTION OF THE HUMAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE OF THE NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
RECOMMENDING THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL
RELATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NAVAJO NATION
COUNCIL TO APPROVE AND SUPPORT THE
NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS CEMETERY ACT OF
2003 (H.R. 2983) INTRODUCED BY U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TOM UDALL OF NEW MEXICO THAT THE BILL WILL MAKE ALL TRIBES ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR STATE CEMETERY GRANTS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

Whereas:

1. Pursuant to 2 N.N.C. §§601 and 604(B) (1), (3), and (5), the Human Services Committee is established and continued as a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council and is empowered to promulgate regulations for the enforcement and implementation of the labor laws and policies of the Navajo Nation and laws relating to veterans services; to recommend legislation regarding employment, training, and veterans services; and to serve as the oversight authority for the Division of Human Resources, including the Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs (DNVA); and

2. The DNVA under the Division of Human Resources was established to foster the interests of Navajo veterans by advocating and providing administration oversight and coordination of veterans programs and services of federal, state and tribal governments and private agencies; and

3. Pursuant to Resolution GSCMY-40-03 of the Government Services Committee of the Navajo Nation Council, one of the purposes of the DNVA is to seek out and identify additional funding sources and make recommendations for the implementation, expansion and improvement of existing programs of the divisions and offices of the Navajo Nation to ensure that Navajo veterans receive the benefits and services they are entitled to; and

4. Although the federal State Cemetery Grants Program (SCGP) exists pursuant to 38 U.S.C. Section 2408 since 1978 for the benefit of all U.S. Armed Forces service members and veterans, Indian Tribes of the U.S. are ineligible to apply for program funding to establish, expand or improve a veterans cemetery on their reservations because eligibility requirements are limited to states only; and

5. The legislators of Arizona and New Mexico in year 2003 sessions have passed legisla-

tions in support of an amendment to the law to allow Indian tribes' participation in the SCGP with funding to establish, expand or improve cemetery on the reservations. The DNVA is planning to establish a new veterans cemetery, to replace the old and full to capacity Ft. Defiance Veterans Cemetery, within the four sacred mountains of the Navajo Nation to afford burial of Native American and non-native veterans, and their eligible spouses and dependent children; and

6. By Resolution CJ-5-40, the Navajo Nation Council resolved that the Navajo People stood ready to aid and defend the United States Government and its institutions against all subversive and armed conflicts and pledged loyalty to the system which recognized minority rights and a way of life. This commitment continues to be exercised in all branches of service and involved at higher ratio than any ethnic group population; and

7. It is in the best interest of all Navajo veterans and their spouses and dependent children the need and benefit for final resting place be established within the four sacred mountains of the Navajo Nation.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved That:

1. The Human Services Committee of the Navajo Nation Council hereby recommends the Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Navajo Nation Council to approve and support the Native American Veterans Cemetery Act of 2003 (H.R. 2983) introduced by U.S. Representative Tom Udall of New Mexico that the bill will make all tribes eligible to apply for State Cemetery Grants from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This legislation is attached hereto as Exhibit "A".

2. The Human Services Committee of the Navajo Nation Council requests the Navajo Nation Washington office to assist by monitoring the progress of the legislation and inform Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs and Human Services Committee for appearances before congressional committees and testimonies.

3. The Human Services Committee of the Navajo Nation Council further recommends that the Office of the President/Vice President of the Navajo Nation and the full Navajo Nation Council support and authorize this effort and initiative on behalf of the Navajo Nation veterans and families.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly considered by the Human Services Committee of the Navajo Nation Council at a duly called meeting at Window Rock, Navajo Nation (Arizona), at which a quorum was present and that same was passed by a vote of 4 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstained, this 14th day of November, 2003.

LARRY ANDERSON,
Chairperson, Human Services Committee.

HONORING 75 YEARS OF HISTORY

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2005

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Kinnelon Fire Department, of the Borough of Kinnelon, in Morris County, New Jersey, a vibrant community I am proud to represent. On January 29, 2005, the good citizens of Kinnelon are celebrating the fire department's seventy-fifth anniversary.

For seventy-five years, members of the Kinnelon Fire Department have been protecting and serving the residents of their community. The fire department is made up of