
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS TO ALLOW A THIRD PARTY WITH APPROPRIATE
DOCUMENTATION TO ORDER A GOVERNMENT HEADSTONE FOR THE
UNMARKED GRAVE OF A VETERAN.

1 WHEREAS, thousands of men and women have served in the
2 Armed Services of the United States since the birth of the
3 nation in 1776; and

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5 WHEREAS, many have paid the ultimate sacrifice, giving
6 their lives defending the freedoms that all citizens of the
7 United States enjoy today; and

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9 WHEREAS, from 1861 to 1865, the issue of states' rights
10 embroiled the United States in the Civil War, particularly those
11 dealing with the issue of slavery, pitting the anti-slavery
12 Union North against the pro-slavery Confederacy of the South;
13 and

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15 WHEREAS, after four years of bloody combat that left over
16 600,000 soldiers dead and destroyed much of the South's
17 infrastructure, the Confederacy collapsed, slavery was
18 abolished, and the difficult reconstruction process of restoring
19 national unity and guaranteeing rights to freed slaves began;
20 and

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22 WHEREAS, Private J.R. Kealoha was a Union soldier in the
23 41st Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops, and is believed to have
24 participated in the Richmond-Petersburg Campaign, which ended in
25 March 1865; and



1 WHEREAS, the grave of Private J.R. Kealoha, currently
2 located at the historic Oahu Cemetery, is completely unmarked;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, in 1879, Congress approved the furnishing of
5 headstones for unmarked veterans' graves in private cemeteries;
6 and

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8 WHEREAS, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, a
9 government headstone or marker for the unmarked grave of any
10 deceased eligible veteran in any cemetery around the world,
11 regardless of the veterans date of death, is furnished upon
12 request, at no charge to the applicant with appropriate
13 documentation; and

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15 WHEREAS, until 2012, a third party with appropriate
16 documentation could order a government headstone for the
17 unmarked grave of a veteran; and

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19 WHEREAS, this policy changed when the Department of
20 Veterans Affairs adopted Code of Federal Regulations §38.632 in
21 2009, which took effect in 2012, to require that an application
22 for a government headstone for an unmarked grave can only be
23 made by the deceased veteran's next of kin, person authorized in
24 writing by the veteran's next of kin, or personal representative
25 authorized in writing by the veteran; and

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27 WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs' 2009 policy
28 change created an impossible and unnecessary burden for
29 individuals and groups seeking to honor veterans, like Private
30 J.R. Kealoha, who served many generations ago and are not likely
31 to have descendants who would able to identify them; and

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33 WHEREAS, it is only fitting that we honor the men and women
34 who served in the Armed Services of the United States by
35 allowing headstones or markers to be placed on the unmarked
36 graves of deceased veterans to designate their final resting
37 place; now, therefore,

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39 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
40 Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
41 Session of 2014, the Senate concurring, that the United States
42 Congress and Department of Veterans Affairs are urged to allow a
43 third party with appropriate documentation to order a government
44 headstone for the unmarked grave of a veteran; and



1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
2 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the President Pro
3 Tempore of the United States Senate, Speaker of the United
4 States House of Representatives, the United States Secretary of
5 Veterans Affairs, and Hawaii's Congressional delegation.

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OFFERED BY:

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H. Kashiwagi

MAR 07 2014

