

SHORT TITLE: Memorializing Oklahoma's Congressional Delegation to encourage the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to build a national cemetery in central Oklahoma; distribution.

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 44th Legislature (1994)

SENATE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION NO. 053

By: Gustafson, Douglass,
Price, Fair and Snyder of
the Senate

and

Bass and Bonny of the
House

AS INTRODUCED

A Concurrent Resolution joining veterans groups in protesting the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' decision not to build a national cemetery in central Oklahoma; memorializing Oklahoma's Congressional Delegation to encourage the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to build a national cemetery in central Oklahoma; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, in February 1991, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it needed 50 acres for a national cemetery to serve the more than 300,000 veterans and their families in central Oklahoma. The VA planned to spend \$8,550,000 for the new veterans cemetery to serve central Oklahoma through the year 2030. According to the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, the 1990 census for Oklahoma shows there were 377,147 veterans in the State of Oklahoma of which over 300,000 are within a 100-mile radius of Oklahoma City. Oklahoma veterans and families must now endure the hardship of traveling hundreds of miles to attend a burial in a national cemetery in their state; and

WHEREAS, Oklahomans have long awaited the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to select a site for a national cemetery in central Oklahoma. Three central Oklahoma communities, El Reno, Guthrie and Edmond, were all under consideration as a location for the cemetery; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs spent \$250,000 on an Environmental Impact Statement that will expire in 1996 and must be reaccomplished at great expense if no positive action is taken. The El Reno Chamber of Commerce spent approximately \$10,000 to promote the effort to have the cemetery located at Fort Reno while the Guthrie Chamber of Commerce and the City of Edmond also spent thousands of dollars on the effort.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 44TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

THAT the Oklahoma State Legislature joins The American Legion, The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and other Oklahoma veterans groups protesting the United States Department of Veterans Affairs' decision not to build a national cemetery in central Oklahoma until after the year 2000.

THAT the Oklahoma State Legislature memorializes the Oklahoma Congressional Delegation to support building a national cemetery in central Oklahoma in the near future and take measures to encourage the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to finish the project which has already incurred a heavy investment.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to the State of Oklahoma's Washington, D.C. office for distribution to the Oklahoma Congressional Delegation and Jesse Brown, Secretary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

44-2-2345

THC