
HOUSE 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
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27 WHEREAS, the grave of Private J.R. Kealoha, currently
28 located at the historic Oahu Cemetery, is completely unmarked;
29 and



1 WHEREAS, in 1879, Congress approved the furnishing of
2 headstones for unmarked veterans' graves in private cemeteries;
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5 WHEREAS, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, a
6 government headstone or marker for the unmarked grave of any
7 deceased eligible veteran in any cemetery around the world,
8 regardless of the veterans date of death, is furnished upon
9 request, at no charge to the applicant with appropriate
10 documentation; and
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12 WHEREAS, until 2012, a third party with appropriate
13 documentation could order a government headstone for the
14 unmarked grave of a veteran; and
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16 WHEREAS, this policy changed when the Department of
17 Veterans Affairs adopted Code of Federal Regulations §38.632 in
18 2009, which took effect in 2012, to require that an application
19 for a government headstone for an unmarked grave can only be
20 made by the deceased veteran's next of kin, person authorized in
21 writing by the veteran's next of kin, or personal representative
22 authorized in writing by the veteran; and
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24 WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs' 2009 policy
25 change created an impossible and unnecessary burden for
26 individuals and groups seeking to honor veterans, like Private
27 J.R. Kealoha, who served many generations ago and are not likely
28 to have descendants who would be able to identify them; and
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30 WHEREAS, it is only fitting that we honor the men and women
31 who served in the Armed Services of the United States by
32 allowing headstones or markers to be placed on the unmarked
33 graves of deceased veterans to designate their final resting
34 place; now, therefore,
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36 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
37 Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
38 Session of 2014, that the United States Congress and Department
39 of Veterans Affairs are urged to allow a third party with
40 appropriate documentation to order a government headstone for
41 the unmarked grave of a veteran; and



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

MAR 07 2014

